

EPISCOPAL DIVINITY SCHOOL

Thesis/Project

FINDING SOMEWHERE ELSE TO GO:  
THE EFFECT OF THE CONSERVATIVE TAKEOVER OF THE SOUTHERN  
BAPTIST CONVENTION ON MINISTERS WHO WOULD NOT CONFORM TO THE  
NEW LEADERSHIP AND THEOLOGY

BY

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**Finding Somewhere Else to Go:  
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Who Would Not Conform to the New Leadership and Theology**

By Rev. Dr. Cindy Savage-King

Abstract

In 1979 conservatives in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) staged a successful coup and gained total control of the denomination. Ministers who were not “loyal to the party in power” either left the new, conservative SBC or were chased away. This thesis uses interviews with W. Randall Lolley, Ginger Barfield, Anna Anderson, Molly Marshall, and Mona West to describe their journeys into and out of the Southern Baptist Convention. Also told is the story of the author, Cindy Savage-King. Included in the thesis is a brief history of the takeover including the reasons conservatives felt a change was necessary and the tactics and methods used to stage the coup. Also included is a discussion about major changes conservatives made to the Southern Baptist statement of faith, the Baptist Faith and Message. Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission and a member of the committee which drew up BFM2000, is interviewed by the author and responds to questions regarding the changes. The thesis concludes with a discussion of today's Southern Baptist Convention and its stance regarding certain religious and social issues. These issues include the role of women in the church (in the new SBC the office of pastor is restricted to men) and women in the home (women are told they must “submit graciously” to the authority of their husband). Another issue discussed is the SBC's current view on homosexuality, including the effect of a SBC Bylaws amendment which denies membership to churches which “act to affirm, approve, or endorse homosexual behavior.”

## Dedication

This thesis is dedicated with all my love to my wonderful wife, Ruthann, who so unselfishly made all the sacrifices necessary for me to complete my Doctor of Ministry degree.

This thesis is also dedicated with unending love to the memory of my dear parents, Jimmy and Jean King, who always made sure I had a book to read, who encouraged my pursuit of education, and who completely supported my ministry.

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Being a Baptist in an Episcopal school was rarely an issue. However, when it came time to write about Baptist theology I needed Baptist guidance. Dr. W. Randall Lolley, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary when I was a student there, stepped in and with only my profound thanks as remuneration led me through a directed study of the Baptist Faith and Message. His insight into the changes from the 1963



version to the 2000 version was invaluable in helping me explain major changes made by conservatives following the takeover of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The section of my thesis on the changes to the Baptist Faith and Message would have been incomplete without the commentary of Dr. Richard Land. Though we disagreed on most points he was gracious and cordial throughout the conversation. I'm sure he won't agree with the conclusions recorded in my thesis but I hope I can continue to call him a friend.

And, lastly, this paper could never have been written without the ministers cited in the case studies. Their willingness to tell their stories put real faces to the story. With the takeover more than twenty years past today's Baptists have become complacent, not realizing how many were hurt by the actions of the conservatives. Dr. W. Randall Lolley, Dr. Ginger Barfield, Rev. Anna Anderson, Dr. Molly Marshall, and Dr. Mona West – children of God called to God's service – all had careers detoured or even derailed. These ministers were already doing marvelous works for God when the conservatives decided they “needed to find somewhere else to go.” Go they did, taking their talents to organizations which have been enriched by their ministries. Their departure is the Southern Baptist Convention's loss.

## Introduction

Most people can recall with amazing clarity and detail where they were and what they were doing when certain major historic events occurred: the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, the explosion of the Challenger space shuttle, the events of 9/11. The conservative takeover of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) was so devastating to my career as a minister I can tell you where I was, who I was with, and what I was doing in 1980 when it became obvious the conservatives were well on their way to total domination. It is my contention that the changes the conservatives made after gaining control of the Southern Baptist Convention were so antithetical to arguably authentic Baptist theology and polity, so sexist and heterosexist, that many of the SBC's brightest leaders and potential leaders fled, were chased away, or were forced into a "closet" of one type or another. I was one of them. This thesis will describe and analyze the implications of the takeover in three areas: the change in Southern Baptist theology as articulated in changes made to the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message (BFM1963); in light of the takeover, the impact on the career of persons dedicated to ministry in the Southern Baptist Convention, including myself; and a "before and after" discussion of the Southern Baptist Convention regarding the status of the church, women, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT) people, and moderates.

As part of this introduction, let me share my own story in relation to this thesis project:

## One Fateful Day

In the summer of 1980 I had just completed my first year as a student at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (SEBTS), a Southern Baptist seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina. To help pay my way through seminary I worked for Plant Services, the department which oversaw maintenance for the school. Several of my classmates also worked for Plant Services and that day in June we were cleaning equipment behind our office building. It was hot, dirty work but we were young and fired by the conviction that even this cleaning chore was the Lord's work. A radio played softly behind us and we wiped sweat from our eyes as we sang along with the music. The SBC's annual convention was in session and when news of that day's proceedings was announced during the hourly news (in North Carolina, deep in the heart of SBC country, Convention happenings *are* news) we paused to listen, knowing the direction of the denomination possibly could turn on this session. Turn it did, as well as my future. When the radio announcer stated that the conservative candidate, Bailey Smith, had won my classmates and I, with our plans to be future pastors and leaders, knew our dreams were over. Indeed, since we were all women, we knew our careers as pastors or leaders of any kind were over.

## A Closeted Ministry

Unknown to the others that day, however, harbored within my heart was a secret I dared not mention: I was a lesbian. I lived in terror of discovery, but in a denomination with a fierce belief in the autonomy of the local church (each church decides for itself whom to ordain or admit into membership) and the priesthood of the believer (each

Christian has direct communication with God through Christ and has no need for intercession by a clergy) I dreamed that someday it would be possible for me to serve openly. (“Believer” in its singular form is the accepted usage by Southern Baptist moderates and progressives. These will be discussed further in Chapter 2.)

Technically, according to these tenets, it was up to me to determine whether homosexuality was a sin and similarly it was up to my church to determine whether I was “gifted for ministry” and therefore a candidate for ordination. Being homosexual in 1979, however, was still widely considered a sin in the SBC so I remained closeted.

I had been a Southern Baptist my entire life and could not imagine going anywhere else. I had made my “profession of faith”<sup>1</sup> and was baptized<sup>2</sup> when I was nine. My parents had always made sure I attended church on Sundays and as I became old enough to walk to church on my own (we lived only two blocks from the church) I became even more active. My childhood pastor once said, “If you are too busy to come to church twice on Sunday and once on Wednesday then you have more business than God intended for you to have.” I took him at his word. If the church doors were open I was there. I won “perfect attendance” awards for Sunday School and rarely missed a Sunday morning worship service. On Sunday evenings I attended youth choir practice, then Training Union (a teaching service), and then the evening prayer service. On Wednesday nights I attended Girls’ Auxiliary (GA) where I learned about missions and missionaries. The church members encouraged and supported me. If a prayer or speaking part was

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<sup>1</sup> In the Southern Baptist Convention a “profession of faith” is not a creedal statement but a personal declaration (“I accept Jesus Christ as my personal Savior.”) in the belief that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah promised in scripture, God’s Son sent to redeem humankind.

<sup>2</sup> Believer’s baptism by immersion follows a profession of faith in the SBC.

required from one of the youth I often got the call. No one was surprised when I announced as a college student that God was calling me to the ministry.

In 1979 I graduated from the University of North Carolina with a Bachelor of Music Education degree. In August of that same year I enrolled at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina. SEBTS was the first seminary targeted following the conservative takeover because it was deemed to be too liberal. I prefer to describe Southeastern Seminary as open-minded. I was not indoctrinated but was encouraged to think for myself. Professors would present many theories of biblical interpretation, of theology, and of religious issues. From these studies, I was able to form my own theology. Although I had started out as a church music major I graduated in 1982 with a Master of Divinity with Languages degree, having concentrated my studies in pastoral care.

Following graduation from SEBTS the fear of discovery kept me away from the ministry. Seminary classmates who did know about my sexual orientation had threatened to “out” me if I ever sought ordination. The fear of being “outed” sent many of my gay seminary classmates to denominations more accepting of homosexuality such as the United Church of Christ or the Unitarian Universalists. Others joined the Metropolitan Community Church (MCC), a Christian denomination founded in October 1968 specifically to be an outreach to the LGBT community and its allies. I remained a Southern Baptist because I *was* a Southern Baptist.

Years after leaving seminary, when I had lost touch with those who could expose me as a lesbian, God’s call overcame my earlier fears and I applied to become a chaplain in

the Army Reserve. To be accepted two major requirements needed fulfilling. To satisfy the first requirement – that of two years of ministerial experience – I became associate pastor of my home church, Longview Baptist Church in Raleigh, North Carolina.<sup>3</sup> The remaining requirement would be the most difficult: ordination. The conservatives who now were firmly in control of the SBC had begun to speak out against the ordination of women. Autonomy of the local church still prevailed at that time, however, and Longview voted unanimously to ordain me. The ordination took place on May 26, 1991. With all requirements fulfilled I was commissioned Chaplain (1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant) Cynthia D. King in the United States Army Reserve.

Over the next several years I extended my ministry. Every fall I volunteered as a chaplain at the North Carolina State Fair. I became a volunteer chaplain with the Raleigh Police Department. Once a month I met with other area Southern Baptist chaplains (hospital, prison, military, law enforcement) as part of a chaplain support group. During all this I guarded my secret; guarded it so tightly that I once remarked I didn't live in a closet I lived in a vault.

In 1997 my world came crashing to a halt when I was diagnosed with colon cancer. The cancer metastasized to my liver and my life was in great jeopardy. I later would find out that I had been given a 33% chance of survival. Several months of treatment (including experimental therapy), prayer, and the tender loving care of my family saved my life. As I recovered I took a long look at my life and decided I didn't like what I saw one little bit. I realized that my closeted life was suffocating me. I gave up all my

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<sup>3</sup> I would remain as associate pastor for over ten years. Even after I moved to Boston the pastor asked that my name remain in the bulletin so that anyone new to the church would know at a glance Longview's stance on women in the ministry.

positions, packed my cat and my computer, and moved to Boston. It was like Dorothy leaving the black and white of Kansas for the colorful land of the Munchkins. My life was opened to ideas and opportunities that had resided in the depths of my mind but which I had not been able to even conceptualize. I discovered that I could be open about my sexuality, and more importantly, I could be a gay minister. I came out to my family. I came out to my senior chaplain in the Army. (I no longer was in the Army but remained close to him.) I married the love of my life. Upon the death of my dear mother in 2009 I introduced “my wife” to all those who came to pay respects at my mother’s wake and funeral, thereby coming out to my church and close friends.

#### Minister without a Church

I am now completely open as a lesbian. Being outed to the SBC holds no fear for me. I am also a Southern Baptist minister who can never serve in a Southern Baptist church. What few Southern Baptist churches there are in Massachusetts would not hire me even if I were heterosexual; in the new, conservative controlled SBC, just being a woman is enough for me to be denied a pastorate. Even if I were to move back to the South there would be no Southern Baptist church opportunities for me as a pastor. In fact, in the new SBC I can’t even be a member of any SBC church. Churches which accept homosexuals into membership are kicked out of the denomination. Since a position as a Southern Baptist minister of any kind is an impossibility I am working as an interfaith hospice chaplain. My hope is that God will use me to bring comfort to the patients and families I visit.

The Southern Baptist Convention still holds my chaplain endorsement only because I have never been officially reported as a lesbian. Knowing any further endorsement from the SBC is impossible, I will seek chaplain endorsement through the Alliance of Baptists following the completion of my Doctor of Ministry degree. The Alliance of Baptists is an organization formed by progressives when it became apparent that the new SBC and its intolerance for diversity held no place for them. The Alliance is not a denomination, however. As its name says, it is an alliance. Therefore I remain, if only in spirit, a Southern Baptist.

#### Structure of the Thesis

My life and ministry was one of thousands affected by the takeover. People with brilliant careers ahead of them – careers dedicated to God’s service – were thrown aside by the conservatives. Gifted ministers whose “sin” was they did not agree with the new leaders of the Southern Baptist Convention – men who claimed to speak for God and considered disagreement with them to be disagreement with God. The theologies of the discarded ministers were not in line with the new theology of the SBC; therefore, according to the new leadership those ministers must have been mistaken about God’s call. In this thesis I will describe the stories of some of the brilliant ministers who were cast aside and the effect the takeover had on their careers.

My personal theology and those of my case studies are in line with the Southern Baptist theology under which we were all trained and ordained; a theology summarized in the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message, the SBC’s statement of faith. We have not changed our theologies. This thesis will show that it is the SBC which has changed. The



new theology of the conservatives, as summarized in the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message, is far removed from true Southern Baptist theology and polity. Whereas the Southern Baptist Convention was once a denomination headed toward a progressive stance on women in the ministry, and perhaps one day a similar stance on LGBT people in the ministry, the takeover took the SBC away from being a mainstream denomination and onto a theological path of ultraconservatism.

## Chapter Outline

This thesis is not intended to be a history of the takeover of the Southern Baptist Convention. This work's purpose is to describe the aftermath of the actions of a group of conservative men, especially the effect of those actions on some of the persons who refused to acquiesce to the control of the new regime, including myself. I will describe the depths to which the conservatives were willing to go to advance their theological views and I will give space to former Southern Baptists to articulate for themselves the impact wrought on them by the men who transformed the Southern Baptist Convention.

I will predominantly use the words "conservative" and "moderate" to describe the two sides of the battle because those words most accurately encompass the largest groups of people involved. Occasionally I'll use the words "fundamentalist," "progressive," or "liberal," often when those words were used as a descriptor by someone else.

Chapter 1 of this thesis will describe the history of Baptists and the SBC including its prior stance on slavery, civil rights, and women. Further, some of the architects of the takeover will be discussed along with the events leading up to the coup and why conservatives felt a change was necessary. In addition, I will discuss the takeover plan

regarding the people and the churches, the SBC presidency, and the seminaries. I close Chapter 1 with an examination of the outcome: the exodus of its moderates and progressives and the formation of the Alliance of Baptists and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. I had hoped to interview Paige Patterson and ask questions about the takeover. However, he was unavailable for an interview and declined to answer the list of questions I emailed to him.

In Chapter 2, I continue to examine the outcome of the takeover by taking a closer look at the changes in Southern Baptist theology. This discussion will focus on the Baptist Faith and Message. I touch briefly on the 1925 version but will concentrate on the 1963 and 2000 versions. More specifically, I will discuss the major changes from the 1963 version to the 2000 version and the significance of those changes. To end the chapter, I will present a conservative response to some of the moderate criticisms of the 2000 version. Dr. Richard Land, president of the SBC's Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, was on the committee which wrote the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 and will answer my questions.

In Chapter 3, I will return to the examination of the exodus of talent from the SBC following the change to conservative rule. The departure of Dr. W. Randall Lolley from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary will be highlighted. His achievements while president there were impressive but he was branded a "liberal" and he refused to buckle to the will of the new leadership. After the takeover, he resigned rather than hire only faculty members who reflected the denomination's new "most commonly held beliefs" (i.e., conservatism and biblical inerrancy). I will also profile Dr. Ginger Barfield,

Reverend Anna Anderson, Dr. Molly T. Marshall, and Dr. Mona West. I will follow the careers and paths of these ministers and discuss their present relationships with the Southern Baptist Convention. More importantly, I will focus on where they think their careers would be today if the takeover never had happened and how they adjusted their career paths to continue their ministry.

Chapter 4 will take a “before and after” look at the SBC. In doing so I will examine where the SBC has stood and now stands on church authority, women in the church, women in the home, women’s issues, women in ministry, and homosexuality.

In the “Conclusion,” I will summarize the effect of the conservative takeover on the Southern Baptist Convention. I will re-state the historic Baptist principles which were changed or negated. Lastly, I will give an update on the ministries of those people I mention as being discarded by the SBC.

## Chapter 1: The Southern Baptist Convention

The baptism of believers by total immersion, and the consequent denial of infant baptism, proved the most controversial practice of English Baptists. This practice conferred their name and provided a vivid picture to distinguish them from others.

– H. Leon McBeth in *The Baptist Heritage*<sup>4</sup>

Baptists trace their beginnings to a search for freedom that began in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. A group of dissenters broke away from the Church of England out of disagreement with the Church's control over their lives. Led by John Smyth, a former Anglican priest, and Thomas Helwys, a lay person, the group fled to Amsterdam to avoid possible death sentences imposed by King James 1 and the Church. This early group practiced believers' baptism (the practice of withholding baptism until an individual is old enough to make a profession of faith) and rejected creeds, church hierarchy, and human authorities. Smyth eventually drifted toward Mennonite beliefs and broke away from the group. The remaining Baptists returned to England where Helwys became such an outspoken opponent of the King and the Church that he was imprisoned where he eventually died, becoming the first Baptist martyr. Following Helwys' death, the Baptists began to meet quietly. Their theology was broadened to include separation of church and state, voluntary faith, congregational church polity, and the right of the individual to read and interpret scripture. Internal differences (such as a disagreement over Calvinism) led to the formation of different branches of English Baptists. In 1631,

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<sup>4</sup> H. Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage: Four Centuries of Baptist Witness* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1987), 79.

another Baptist leader, Roger Williams, fled England for America where he is credited with establishing the first Baptist church in America at Providence, Rhode Island.<sup>5</sup>

Over the next few centuries Baptists changed, grew, and split several times until eventually for the group which would become Southern Baptists the emphasis began to center on missions. In the early 1800's sectional differences arose over the issue of slavery. When the British government abolished slavery in 1832 the Board of Baptist Ministers in and Near London began to pressure the Baptists in American to support abolition. The Americans responded that change would need to be gradual. The issue came to a head, however, in November, 1844 when the Acting Board of Managers refused to appoint a missionary sponsored by the Georgia Baptist Convention because he was a slave owner. Throughout the coming months as tensions steadily mounted Baptist leaders in both the North and the South agreed that a separation was necessary. In May 1845 Baptists in the southern states gathered in Augusta, Georgia. W. B. Johnson, president of the South Carolina Baptist State Convention, arrived with a draft of a constitution for a new convention. The new group of Baptists had little concern for a statement of faith. "No creed but the Bible" had been the Baptist way for over 100 years and W. B Johnson would carry it forward to the new denomination. Thus it was that on May 10, 1845, a mere 328 Southerners formed the Southern Baptist Convention.

Throughout Southern Baptist history progressives, moderates, and conservatives placed an emphasis on missions. Despite theological differences they worked together to obey Jesus' command given in the Great Commission. Southern Baptists tended to err on

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<sup>5</sup> Bruce T. Gourley, *A Capsule History of Baptists* (Atlanta: Baptist History and Heritage Society, 2010), 14.

the side of unity when faced with theological dissension. Historians refer to this approach as the “Grand Compromise.”<sup>6</sup> It worked to hold the Convention together through battles over slavery, suffrage, evolution, the Genesis controversy, the ordination of the first woman, and desegregation. The last two disagreements came relatively close together – in 1964 and 1968, respectively – with progressives carrying the day in both. By this time, however, conservatives had had enough of what they perceived as a liberal slant to the denomination. A plan was set in motion to gain total control of the Southern Baptist Convention.

#### Hostile Takeover

In the early 1960’s the SBC had begun to drift toward the mainstream of Christian religious culture in the United States. Seminary professors began to study scripture in its historical and literary context<sup>7</sup> rather than just use it as a sermon source. Women made progress toward church equality. Addie Davis became the first Southern Baptist woman to be ordained on August 9, 1964 at the Watts Street Baptist Church in Durham, North Carolina. Additionally, progressives were able to pass resolutions in favor of the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling (1954) and the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1968 against the wishes of most Southern Baptists.

In response to these progressive victories conservative Southern Baptists began pushing an agenda based on a belief in the inerrancy (without error in all matters,

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<sup>6</sup> Barry Hankins, *Uneasy in Babylon: Southern Baptist Conservative and American Culture (Religion and American Culture)* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University Alabama Press, 2003), 4.

<sup>7</sup> Nancy Tatom Ammerman, *Baptist Battles: Social Change and Religious Conflict in the Southern Baptist Convention* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1990), 63.

including science and history) of the Bible. In 1973 they formed a group to monitor the use of the historical-critical method in the seminaries (the method of studying scripture within the context of the time and culture in which it was written), a method largely opposed by conservatives. Conservatives further insisted that SBC money not be sent to schools whose professors did not present an inerrantist view.<sup>8</sup>

The amount of doctrinal freedom which should be allowed within the SBC became an issue of discussion. This was ironic in that the first group of Baptists broke away from the Church of England in a search for doctrinal freedom. The question now facing the Convention became how much freedom was too much? Should more controls be put in place as a tool for denominational uniformity? Fundamentalists believed too much freedom lead to false teachings.<sup>9</sup> Moderates countered that putting controls in place went against “liberty of conscience and denominational diversity.”<sup>10</sup>

By 1979, however, a plan for a complete takeover of the SBC was in place which would allow conservatives to advance their own agenda. The plan was simple but ingenious – win the presidency of the SBC enough years to make the appointments necessary to gain control of the Convention. This strategy was formed in 1967 by two conservative Southern Baptists: Paul Pressler, an appellate judge from Houston, Texas, and Paige Patterson, then a seminary student and later president of the SBC and two of its seminaries. Conservatives were upset at the supposed liberal direction the denomination

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<sup>8</sup> Bill J. Leonard, *God's Last and Only Hope: The Fragmentation of the Southern Baptist Convention* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990), 135.

<sup>9</sup> Walter B. Shurden, ed., *Struggle for the Soul of the SBC: Moderate Responses to the Fundamentalist Movement* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1994), xx.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

was taking and were determined not only to change that direction but to gain total control of the SBC. Judge Pressler, with his attorney's analytical mind, had spotted what he saw as a "weakness" in the SBC structure which could open the way for a possible takeover. The SBC President alone was responsible for appointing members to certain committees. Pressler understood that if conservatives were elected to the presidency for enough years serially, specifically for ten years, these committees could be loaded with like-minded conservatives. By continuing this process of conservative appointments to successive committees they could take absolute control of the denomination.

Once a year Southern Baptists come together to discuss the workings of the SBC, mostly concerning missions. "Messengers," elected by churches in good standing with the Convention, serve as representatives to the annual meeting. According to Southern Baptist polity of 1979 the number of messengers a church could send depended on the amount of money which had been given to the "Cooperative Program," the SBC's central budget. The maximum number any church could send was ten; any contributing and cooperating church could send at least one. More often than not, only a pastor (and maybe his wife) attended so as many as 70% of the meeting attendees were ministers or church workers.

In 1979, however, by having the convention so close to home Patterson and Pressler were able to extend great influence over who attended the meeting. Prior to the annual meeting the two men spoke at hundreds of Southern Baptist churches and warned them of a great threat to the Convention. It's hard for a Southern Baptist to disagree with anyone who claims to be inspired by scripture and to speak for God. Patterson and Pressler



presented the threat as battle for the Bible, claiming Scripture was under attack by liberals. Church members were told that if someone could not unequivocally say he or she believed in the inerrancy of the Bible, then in fact, one didn't; there was no in-between. Those who didn't believe in the absolute inerrancy of the Bible – in other words, the liberals – were the bad guys and needed to be defeated.

Fueled by this battle and the “get out the vote” campaign busloads of conservative Texas Southern Baptists arrived at the 1979 annual meeting just in time to cast a vote for the ultraconservative candidate for president. After voting they boarded their buses and left. It was a legal although underhanded way of “stuffing the ballot box.” Judge Pressler presided over the proceedings from a skybox high above the convention floor, thereby able to direct his minions below. Specific conservatives were directed to sit in seats near designated microphones. Only these conservatives were allowed to speak. Moderates who tried to speak were ruled out of order or had their microphones cut off. It gave the discussion an artificial conservative slant.

Six candidates were on the ballot for president that year including some of the denomination's highest profile candidates. Pressler's choice, Adrian Rogers, won on the first ballot, a feat that was unprecedented with such a large pool of candidates. Rogers won by only 163 votes leaving many to question the voting. In fact, an investigation into voting irregularities showed that some churches sent more than the legal limit of ten messengers and some pastors registered for all ten of their messengers or turned in

multiple ballots for themselves.<sup>11</sup> W. Randall Lolley has often stated that it's unlikely that Rogers would have won outside of Texas where Patterson and Pressler held so much influence.

Now in control of the presidency the conservatives were able to begin the “trickle down” effect the president’s appointments would have on other committees. For instance, the president could make only conservative appointments to the Committee of Committees, who then would make only conservative appointments to the Committee on Boards (now called the Board of Nominations), who then would make only conservative appointments to the Board of Trustees of the seminaries. Once the conservatives were in control of seminary boards the seminaries themselves would be under conservative control.

Southern Baptists have always been wary of education,<sup>12</sup> believing inspiration from God to be sufficient guidance in all things. With the goal of squashing liberalism in the SBC it's no wonder the seminaries were one of the areas targeted by the conservatives first. They didn't try to hide the fact that they were going after the seminaries. In a September 1980 statement to *The Religious Herald* Judge Pressler said:

We are going for the jugular. We are going for having knowledgeable, Bible-centered, Christ-honoring trustees of all our institutions, who are not going to sit there like a bunch of dummies and rubber stamp everything that's presented to them, but who are going to inquire why this is being done, what is being taught, what is the finished product of our young people who come out of our institutions going to be.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Grady C. Cothen, *What Happened to the Southern Baptist Convention? A Memoir of the Controversy* (Macon, GA: Smith & Helwys Publishing Co., 1993), 15-16.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 273.

<sup>13</sup> Walter B. Shurden and Randy Shepley, *Going for the Jugular: A Documentary History of the SBC Holy War* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1996), 56.

Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (my seminary *alma mater*), fell first. In October 1987 a set of new trustees with conservatives having a one person majority arrived on campus “indicating their intent to control.”<sup>14</sup> SEBTS utilized a process of shared governance and the procedure for electing new faculty members involved participation of all faculty, administration, and trustees. The new conservative Board of Trustees let it be known that only inerrantists would be hired. They instituted a new hiring procedure that effectively eliminated input by the dean and faculty.<sup>15</sup> Later that month the president, W. Randall Lolley, notified the board of his intent to resign. In addition, Dean Morris Ashcraft and four members of the executive council resigned or took early retirement. Conservative Lewis A. Drummond was installed as president in 1988. When investigations into the theological positions of faculty members began, more resigned. Student enrollment dropped over 50%. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools placed the seminary on probation in 1991 because of the instability of the seminary and because of the board’s exclusion of administration and faculty in hiring and governance. The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) followed suit in 1992. It would be 1994 before the probations were lifted. In 1992 the architect of the takeover, Paige Patterson, became president of SEBTS.

Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (SBTS), the first SBC seminary founded in 1859 in Louisville, Kentucky, fell to the conservatives in the early 1990’s after similar conflicts occurred between trustees (who gained a conservative majority in 1989), the

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<sup>14</sup> Morris Ashcraft, “Southeastern Seminary in Crisis: 1986 - 1987,” *Faith and Mission* 6, no. 1 (Fall, 1988): 56.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, 57.

president, and staff. The Board of Trustees took steps to require faculty members to adhere to their narrow views. Current faculty complained to SBTS' accrediting agency, the Association of Theological Schools, that this was illegally adding requirements to existing contracts. A "Covenant Renewal between Trustees, Faculty, and Administration"<sup>16</sup> avoided probation by the accrediting agency. The moderate president, Roy Honeycutt, resigned in October 1992 and was replaced in February 1993 by the conservative Al Mohler. Large-scale faculty resignations and firings followed. Molly Marshall, the first woman professor appointed to the School of Theology, was forced to resign in 1994. Donna Garland, dean of the School of Social Work, was fired in 1995. In all, SBTS lost 70% of its faculty and 40% of its student body following the conservative shift.

The remaining seminaries followed suit. In 1994 trustees at Southwestern Seminary (Ft. Worth, Texas) fired president Russell Dilday and changed the locks on his office door. The change at Midwestern (Kansas City, Missouri) was more gradual but it, too, fell. New Orleans Seminary (New Orleans, Louisiana) and Golden Gate Seminary (then in San Francisco, now in Mill Valley, California) were already somewhat conservative and did not suffer massive disruptions once conservatives had control of their trustees.

During this time progressive and moderate Southern Baptists continued to try to slow the conservative wave sweeping over the SBC. At the 1985 annual meeting in Dallas a Peace Committee was formed as an attempt to determine the source of the controversy and to work toward reconciliation. Its final report was delivered at the 1987 convention

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<sup>16</sup> Cothen, *What Happened to the Southern Baptist Convention?*, 304.

in St. Louis and recommended the following, among other things: a reaffirmation of the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message; a plea that diversity on the interpretation of the BFM1963 not lead to hostility; and a plan that “trustees determine the theological positions of the seminary administrators and faculty members.”<sup>17</sup> It was this last recommendation which led W. Randall Lolley to vote against the report saying it was an “intrusion into the legitimate role of trustees” and that it would “open the floodgate for all sorts of ‘witch hunts.’”<sup>18</sup> The Peace Committee had promised that a copy of their report would be delivered four-to-six weeks before the 1987 convention but for the most part messengers did not receive a copy until they entered the hall the day of discussion on the report. This delay occurred because the members of the Peace Committee could not come to an agreement. A motion to defer action to allow for further study was defeated. The report passed by an overwhelming majority, seemingly because it was seen as a fundamentalist document.<sup>19</sup>

After that the SBC began to fracture. In 1987 a group of progressive Southern Baptists created a splinter group, the Southern Baptist Alliance (SBA) “to be a dissenting voice” which was “committed to preserving historic Baptist principles of freedom.”<sup>20</sup> In 1991 moderates formed an organization called the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship

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<sup>17</sup> “Report of the Southern Baptist Convention Peace Committee by SBC in St. Louis,” Official Website of the Southern Baptist Convention, <http://www.baptist2baptist.net/b2barticle.asp?ID=65> (accessed April 11, 2011).

<sup>18</sup> W. Randall Lolley, “Years of Pleasure and Pain: 1974 – 1988.” In *Servant Songs: Reflections on the History and Mission of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1950-1988*, ed. Thomas A. Bland, (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 1994), 54.

<sup>19</sup> Cothen, *What Happened to the Southern Baptist Convention*, 219.

<sup>20</sup> “Baptists for a Changing World,” Alliance of Baptists, [www.allianceofbaptists.org](http://www.allianceofbaptists.org) (accessed May 3, 2011).

(CBF). It had not been the intent of either group to leave the denomination but in 1992 the SBA cut all ties with the SBC and changed its name to the Alliance of Baptists. In 1994 the SBC Executive Committee recommended that the Convention cut all ties with the CBF. The conservatives then had absolute control of the Southern Baptist Convention. Left unchecked they began to make swift and sweeping changes. These changes would be incorporated in a re-writing of the SBC statement of faith, the Baptist Faith and Message.

## Chapter 2: Change of Faith

What is the distinctive belief held by Baptists? How may one state this undergirding principle which through the centuries has produced their unity in diversity?

– Herschel H. Hobbs in *The Baptist Faith and Message*<sup>21</sup>

Baptists are not a creedal people. They don't recite creeds such as The Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed which are common among other Protestant denominations. Consequently, the SBC had no written statement of beliefs early in its history. At its founding in 1845 its aversion to anything resembling a creed was clearly laid out: "We have constructed for ourselves no new creed, acting in this manner upon a Baptist aversion for all creeds but the Bible."<sup>22</sup> However, 1925 and 1963 controversies and conservative cries of rampant liberalism led the SBC to issue "confessions of faith" to quell the controversies. In 2000 a new statement of faith followed the conservative takeover of the SBC and clearly spells out the ultraconservative beliefs of the new leadership.

Jeff B. Pool, writing about confessions of faith in the prologue to his book *Sacred Mandates of Conscience: Interpretations of the Baptist Faith and Message* (referring to BFM1963) discusses a "dual conviction at the root of every Baptist Christian's experience":

First, all Christian confessions of faith arise from each person's liberating experience with God through Jesus Christ: articles of faith become written expressions of the convictions of Christian consciences. Second, because such documents arise from each individual's living faith, written confessions of faith never subsume the authority

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<sup>21</sup> Herschel H. Hobbs, *The Baptist Faith and Message* (1971; repr., Nashville, TN: Convention Press, 1989), 7.

<sup>22</sup> W. W. Barnes, *Southern Baptist Convention 1845 - 1953* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1954), 118.

of the Spirit's presence in each believer, the very divine impetus for the written expressions themselves: as a consequence, the community's collective voice, as expressed through confessional documents, can never legitimately dictate terms, doctrines, or policies to the individual's conscience.<sup>23</sup>

Although the SBC at times felt the need to issue confessions of faith, these statements were never intended to be creedal or binding. W. Randall Lolley distinguishes between creeds and confessions of faith: "A confession *affirms* what a group of Baptists say they do believe. A creed *prescribes* what a group of Baptists must believe. Confessions *include*. Creeds *exclude*. Confessions are human constructions, dated and affected by their times; may be revised as needed, and never, ever, are they equal to Christ or Scripture."<sup>24</sup>

The first two versions of the Baptist Faith and Message (1925 and 1963) were clearly meant to be "statements of faith." The third version (2000) uses this same phrase but later statements and changes in the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 (BFM2000) belie and contradict its own description as a "statement of faith." That point will be discussed in the section on the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message.

### The 1925 Baptist Faith and Message

For the first 80 years of the SBC there was no written statement of belief. This changed when the controversy surrounding evolution led to the writing of the 1925 Baptist Faith and Message (BFM1925). The controversy began with J. Frank Norris, a pastor whose church reneged on a \$100,000 pledge to the Convention because of what

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<sup>23</sup> Jeff B. Pool, ed., *Sacred Mandates of Conscience: Interpretations of the Baptist Faith and Message* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 1997), 1.

<sup>24</sup> W. Randall Lolley, unpublished data.



they perceived to be “rampant” liberalism and corruption among the teachers and leaders of the SBC. Norris and another pastor, Dale Crowley, targeted a Baylor University professor accused of teaching Darwin’s theories of evolution. Others took up the cry and it became loud enough that then SBC president E. Y. Mullins chaired a committee to rework the New Hampshire Confession of Faith of 1833,<sup>25</sup> a statement of faith commonly used by Baptists in the North and South. The statement was presented to the 1925 SBC annual meeting. Mullins resisted calls that the words “and not by evolution” be added to the section describing the creation of man.<sup>26</sup>

The preamble of BFM1925 states clearly that confessions of faith are not “complete statements of our faith, having any quality of finality or infallibility,” but are “only guides in interpretation, having no authority over the conscience,” and “are not to be used to hamper freedom of thought.”<sup>27</sup> Further, Russell W. Dilday, former President of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, says Southern Baptists “largely ignored [BFM1925] because they rightly understood it to be a non-binding expression of one group of messengers meeting in one session of one annual convention.” He went on to say, “It might be useful as a consensus statement of widely held convictions, but it had no authority whatsoever.”<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> “The New Hampshire Confession of Faith,” *The Reformed Reader*, <http://www.reformedreader.org/ccf/1833newh.htm> (accessed April 30, 2011).

<sup>26</sup> Jesse C. Fletcher, *The Southern Baptist Convention: A Sesquicentennial History* (Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1994), 143.

<sup>27</sup> “Comparison of 1925, 1963 and 2000 Baptist Faith and Message,” Official Website of the Southern Baptist Convention, <http://www.sbc.net/bfm/bfmcomparison.asp> (accessed April 30, 2011).

<sup>28</sup> Russell H. Dilday, “An Analysis of the Baptist Faith and Message 2000,” *Christian Ethics Today* no. 40 (June 2002): 4,

## The 1963 Baptist Faith and Message

In July 1961 once again accusations of liberalism arose and eventually led to a re-writing of the 1925 Baptist Faith and Message. In that year Broadman Press, the SBC publishing company, published *The Message of Genesis* by Ralph Elliott, a professor of Old Testament at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Elliot's use of historical-critical methodology (the interpretation of scripture against the background of its historical setting) and his portrayal of Genesis 1-11 as mythological literature led to an uproar from conservatives who saw this line of interpretation as a threat to their faith and as disastrous to the SBC.<sup>29</sup> The Broadman Press and Midwestern trustees initially defended Elliott. In 1962, however, more conservative trustees were appointed to the Midwestern board and the tide began to turn against Elliott. He was dismissed for insubordination for refusing to voluntarily withhold the book from publication.<sup>30</sup>

The Convention that year (1962) was abuzz with the controversy. Motions were passed which "reaffirmed...faith in the Bible as the authoritative, authentic, infallible Word of God."<sup>31</sup> Trustees and administrators in Southern Baptist educational institutions were encouraged "to remedy at once those situations in which theological views were being disseminated that threatened the historical accuracy and doctrinal

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<http://www.christianethicstoday.com/cetart/index.cfm?fuseaction=Articles.mainandamp;ArtID=582> (accessed March 25, 2011).

<sup>29</sup> Ammerman, *Baptist Battles*, 63.

<sup>30</sup> Faught II, Jerry L. "The Ralph Elliott Controversy: Competing Philosophies of Southern Baptist Seminary Education." *Baptist History and Heritage* (Summer-Fall 1999): 1. [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m0NXG/is\\_3\\_34/ai\\_94161019/?tag=content:coll](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0NXG/is_3_34/ai_94161019/?tag=content:coll) (accessed May 13, 2011).

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

integrity of the Bible.”<sup>32</sup> In addition, a committee was appointed to review the 1925 Baptist Faith and Message. This committee was chaired by Convention president Herschel Hobbs and was made up of the presidents of the state conventions.

At the following convention (1963) the committee returned with a confession of faith which kept much of the BFM1925 language regarding the scriptures including the statement “truth without any mixture of error.” Ammerman writes that this displeased conservatives because the phrase could continue to be used to teach views other than inerrancy.<sup>33</sup> BFM1963 reiterated that the confession of faith could not be binding or override individual conscience. In addition, the “criterion statement” was added – a phrase which mandates that Jesus Christ be the standard for the interpretation of all scripture. The Baptist Faith and Message of 1963 was adopted “without even changing a punctuation mark” and put to rest the Genesis controversy.<sup>34</sup>

#### The 2000 Baptist Faith and Message

The first two writings of the Baptist Faith and Message developed out of controversies which initiated with cries of “liberalism.” The 2000 Baptist Faith and Message was written after conservatives had taken full control of the denomination. In quick succession conservatives initiated changes which reflected their new dogmatic version of Baptist beliefs and practices.

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ammerman, *Baptist Battles*, 65.

<sup>34</sup> Hobbs, *The Baptist Faith and Message*, 15.

The Baptist Faith and Message is made up of an Introduction, often called a “Preamble,” and several “Articles.” BFM1963 had seventeen articles with an eighteenth, “The Family,” added in 1998. BFM2000 has eighteen articles. The articles are as follows:

Article I: The Scriptures	Article X: Last Things
Article II: God	Article XI: Evangelism and Missions
Article III: Man	Article XII: Education
Article IV: The Doctrine of Salvation	Article XIII: Stewardship
Article V: God’s Purpose of Grace	Article XIV: Cooperation
Article VI: The Church	Article XV: The Christian and the Social Order
Article VII: Baptism and the Lord’s Supper Article	XVI: Peace and War
Article VIII: The Lord’s Day	Article XVII: Religious Liberty
Article IX: The Kingdom	Article XVIII: The Family*
	*Added to BFM1963 in 1998.

At the 1999 annual convention a motion was made and passed which directed the president of the SBC, Paige Patterson (one of the architects of the takeover), to appoint a committee to review the BFM1963 and bring back to the next annual convention any recommendations for revisions. Patterson’s directive was intended to address the cries of liberalism still being made by the conservatives and ultraconservatives; so it was believed a strengthening of the BFM1963 was necessary. Since “liberalism and neo-orthodoxy had not manifested themselves fully in the seminaries as yet, the homosexual lobby had not come out of the closet as yet, and there were no women pastors as yet,”<sup>35</sup> conservatives wanted to make sure they closed the door to these possibilities. Also, this moment was chosen because “it was widely recognized that, in a culture hostile to the

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<sup>35</sup> Malcolm Yarnell, "Which Denomination, Which Convention? Recognizing and Evaluating the Issues," *Journal of the Southern Baptist Convention* (December 2004), <http://www.sbclife.net/Articles/2004/12/sla8.asp> (accessed December 14, 2010).

idea of absolute truth, this generation of Southern Baptists must set forth and clarify the veracity of Scripture as they understand it.”<sup>36</sup>

Unlike the SBC which drafted the first two versions of the Baptist Faith and Message, conservatives were now in total control and were able to write this version to reflect their particular narrow views. Patterson made sure this would happen by hand-picking a group of conservatives who were totally in line with the SBC’s new conservative leaders. The version that passed at the 2000 Convention changed the very face of the Southern Baptist Convention, moving it dangerously close to *prescribing* what all Southern Baptists *had* to believe. In other words, the new SBC now is dangerously close to being a creedal denomination, very much in opposition to basic Baptist tenets.

(Note: In the next section I will examine particular changes between BFM1963 and BFM2000 as a result of the takeover. A full comparison of the documents can be found at <http://sbc.net/bfm/bfmcomparison.asp>.)

## Significant Changes

### Preamble

The extent of what the conservatives had planned for the new SBC became apparent in the wording of the new Preamble: “Baptist churches, associations, and general bodies have adopted confessions of faith as a witness to the world; and as instruments of doctrinal accountability.” “*Doctrinal accountability*.” Never in Baptist history had a document carried wording even closely related to “doctrinal accountability.” In fact, the new preamble leaves out the sentence which clearly states that the Baptist Faith and

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<sup>36</sup> Douglas K. Blount and Joseph D. Wooddell, *Baptist Faith and Message 2000: Critical Issues in America's Largest Protestant Denomination* (Lanham, MD: Roman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007), ix.

message is *not creedal*. Note the difference in the two versions (changes are in bold text):

BFM1963	BFM2000
Throughout their history Baptist bodies, both large and small, have issued statements of faith which comprise a consensus of their beliefs. <b>Such statements have never been regarded as complete, infallible statements of faith, nor as official creeds carrying mandatory authority.</b>	Baptist churches, associations, and general bodies have adopted confessions of faith as a witness to the world, <b>and as instruments of doctrinal accountability.</b> We are not embarrassed to state before the world that these are doctrines we hold precious and as <b>essential</b> to the Baptist tradition of faith and practice.

W. Randall Lolley says this change creates “a creed and carries legal, contractual powers.”<sup>37</sup>

The change contradicts the paragraph before it: “We honor the principles of soul competency and the priesthood of believers.” In fact, any reference to soul competency was left out of the proposed BFM2000 presented to the SBC body a month before the Convention. There was such an outcry, however, that a paragraph with the above sentence was added to the final version. Note the use of “honor” which “waters down” the BFM1963 phrasing “Baptists *emphasize* the soul’s competency before God.”<sup>38</sup> Note also, that “priesthood of the believer” – singular – is changed to “priesthood of the believers” – plural. Russell Dilday says this change “rejects the historic, Baptist doctrine of the priesthood of each individual believer.”<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> W. Randall Lolley, unpublished data.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Dilday, “An Analysis of the Baptist Faith and Message 2000,” 6.

BFM1963	BFM2000
Baptists <b>emphasize</b> the soul's competency before God, freedom in religion, and the <b>priesthood of the believer</b> . However, this emphasis should not be interpreted to mean that there is an absence of certain definite doctrines that Baptists believe, cherish, and with which they have been and are now closely identified.	Baptists cherish and defend religious liberty, and deny the right of any secular or religious authority to impose a confession of faith upon a church or body of churches. We <b>honor</b> the principles of soul competency and the <b>priesthood of believers</b> , affirming together both our liberty in Christ and our accountability to each other under the Word of God.

Albert Mohler, the president of Southern Baptist Seminary, defended the change saying, "Baptists believe in the priesthood of believers, but it is dangerous to say the priesthood of the believer. It is not just that we stand alone; it is that we stand together – and we stand together under the authority of God's word."<sup>40</sup> Tony Cartledge, then editor of *The Biblical Recorder*, countered with

The [new] paragraph uses the familiar words but gives them a carefully doctored spin that de-emphasizes individual freedom while magnifying the concept of accountability to an approved belief system. 'Priesthood of believers' is carefully couched in the plural only, subtly recasting 'the priesthood of the believer' to guard against claims of individual interpretation or revelation from God.<sup>41</sup>

#### Article I: The Scriptures

It is important to note that in all three versions of the Baptist Faith and Message the article on scripture comes before God, "man", or anything else. This is in keeping with Southern Baptist thought that the Word of God comes before all else.

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<sup>40</sup> Mark Wingfield, "Some Question Whether Words Put Back in BF&M Mean the Same Thing," *Baptist Standard*, July 17, 2000. [http://www.baptiststandard.com/2000/7\\_17/pages/bfm\\_meaning.html](http://www.baptiststandard.com/2000/7_17/pages/bfm_meaning.html) (accessed May 13, 2011).

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

BFM2000 changes the criterion on which scripture is interpreted away from an interpretation (a “criterion statement”) which is Christocentric. Instead, it appears to elevate scripture itself above Christ, only making Christ the “focus” not the “criterion”:

<b>BFM1963</b>	<b>BFM2000</b>
The <b>criterion</b> by which the Bible is to be interpreted is Jesus Christ.	All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the <b>focus</b> of divine revelation.

In a commentary on BFM2000 conservatives call the BFM1963 criterion statement “problematic”:

[The criterion statement] states that the only vantage point for interpreting Scripture is Jesus Christ. But, of course, we need Scripture (either directly or indirectly) in order to have any kind of knowledge of Jesus. So in vying for Jesus as the interpretive key, we are in reality pitting some Scriptures against others, claiming that some are more authoritative than others.<sup>42</sup>

Albert Mohler says the change to the criterion statement was made “because 30 years of abuses and attacks upon the integrity of the Bible made clear that some were using [the criterion statement] to deny the truthfulness and authority of the Word of God... [by denying] the truthfulness of whatever biblical passages did not rise to their standard of Jesus’ intention.”<sup>43</sup> To a Baptist, and contrary to Mohler’s words, *all things* are centered on Christ and the Bible cannot be interpreted from any other starting point *but* Christ. According to Dilday, deleting the Christological component of biblical interpretation is

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<sup>42</sup> Joseph D. Wooddell, “The Scriptures,” in Blount and Wooddell, *Baptist Faith and Message 2000*, 8.

<sup>43</sup> R. Albert Mohler, “An Exposition from the Faculty of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary on the Baptist Faith and Message: The Scriptures, BF&M Article 1” The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, <http://www.sbts.edu/documents/bfmexposition.pdf> (accessed April 13, 2011).



considered the “most serious flaw” of BFM2000<sup>44</sup> and “ignores the fact that He is not only ‘the focus of divine revelation’ but is also Lord of the Bible.”

As mentioned in the section on the conservative takeover, inerrancy – or the lack of a belief in inerrancy – was a component of the conservatives’ charges of liberalism in the SBC; yet the word “inerrancy” does not show up in BFM2000. Instead, a sentence on the truth of scripture was added:

<b>BFM1963</b>	<b>BFM2000</b>
It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter.	It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. <b>Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy.</b>

About this sentence conservatives say, “The Bible is truth – all truth – and contains no error of any kind”<sup>45</sup> and “that the Bible is inerrant simply means that it makes no false – and thus no contradictory – claims.”<sup>46</sup>

#### Article VI: The Church

BFM2000’s article on the Church makes vast changes to the understanding and the operation of how a local church operates. Southern Baptist historian and theologian

Walter B. Shurden defines autonomy, that is “church freedom,” as

the historic Baptist affirmation that local churches are free, under the Lordship of Christ, to determine their membership and leadership, to order their worship and work, to ordain whom they perceive as gifted for ministry, male or female, and to

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<sup>44</sup>Dilday, “An Analysis of The Baptist Faith and Message 2000,” 5.

<sup>45</sup> Charles Kelly Jr., Richard Land, and Albert Mohler Jr., *The Baptist Faith and Message*, 3rd Printing ed. (Nashville, TN: LifeWay Press, 2008), 17.

<sup>46</sup> Joseph D. Wooddell, “The Scriptures,” in Blount and Wooddell, *Baptist Faith and Message 2000*, 3.

participate in the larger Body of Christ, of whose unity and mission Baptists are proudly a part.<sup>47</sup>

Given this definition Russell Dilday stated the new Article “signals a trend toward more authoritarian control over congregations.”<sup>48</sup> The phrase “The church is an autonomous body” was deleted and replaced with the much weaker “...is an autonomous local congregation.” Even more so, the new Article VI also deleted the phrase which states that all members – including the pastor – are equal and replaced it with “each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord.” This not only elevated the pastor above the church members it dispelled any idea that women are equal in the church. To make this point clear a sentence was added to the new article which limited the role of pastor to men.

BFM1963	BFM2000
<p>A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is a local body of baptized believers who are associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel, observing the two ordinances of Christ, committed to His teachings, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth.</p> <p>This church is an autonomous body, operating through democratic processes under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. In such a congregation, <b>members are equally responsible.</b> Its Scriptural officers are pastors and deacons.</p>	<p>A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an <b>autonomous local congregation</b> of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, <b>governed by His laws</b>, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation <b>each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord.</b> Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. <b>While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to</b></p>

<sup>47</sup> Walter B. Shurden, *The Baptist Identity: Four Fragile Freedoms* (Macon: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 1993), 33.

<sup>48</sup> Dilday, “An Analysis of The Baptist Faith and Message 2000,” 4.

The weakening of the autonomy of the local church initially began with a series of resolutions. All involved changes which struck at the very heart of traditional Baptist beliefs and practice. The “Official Website of the Southern Baptist Convention” describes a resolution as “an expression of opinion or concern, as compared to a motion, which calls for action. A resolution is not used to direct an entity of the Southern Baptist Convention to specific action other than to communicate the opinion or concern expressed.”<sup>49</sup> Following the takeover versions of these resolutions went beyond “opinions” and well into “directing entities.” They eventually became mandates described in the new Baptist Faith and Message and comprised part of its “doctrinal accountability.”

The first such mandate was a 1984 resolution against the ordination of women. The resolution was in response to the growing number of women being ordained as deacons and ministers. It was also in response to the 1983 formation of Women in Ministry, SBC (today known as Baptist Women in Ministry). The resolution was introduced by Carl F. H. Henry, founding editor of *Christianity Today*, a magazine established to be the fundamentalist answer to the more liberal magazine *Christian Century*. Henry argued that women were first in the Edenic fall and therefore must be submissive to men. He also argued that scripture needed to be the final authority and Christian doctrine couldn’t be decided by modern trends. Henry’s resolution concluded with “we encourage the service of women in all aspects of church life and work other than pastoral functions and

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<sup>49</sup> “SBC Resolutions,” Official Website of the Southern Baptist Convention, <http://sbc.net/resolutions/default.asp> (accessed May 8, 2011).

leadership roles entailing ordination.”<sup>50</sup> (The full text of the resolution is found in Appendix I.)

The official SBC website says the resolution restricting ordination to men is not binding upon local churches.<sup>51</sup> The website also states,

...there is no standard process or policy concerning ordination in the SBC. In fact, the SBC cannot ordain anyone. The matter of ordination is addressed strictly on a local church level. Every Southern Baptist church is autonomous and decides individually whether or not to ordain, or whether to require ordination of its pastor. When a church senses that God has led a person into pastoral ministry, it is a common practice to have a council (usually of pastors) review his testimony of salvation, his pastoral calling from the Lord, and his qualifications (including theological preparation and scriptural qualifications according to 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:7-9) for pastoral ministry. Based upon that interview the church typically decides whether or not ordination would be appropriate.<sup>52</sup>

Note the use of “he” and “his.” They don’t even bother to say that women are excluded because it’s understood. In practice, a church which ordains a woman or calls a woman as a pastor will be “disfellowshipped.” This means that their financial contributions will no longer be accepted, they will not be allowed to send representatives to annual conventions, and they will not be allowed to use any of the resources available to local churches. They are, in actuality, expelled. Malcolm Yarnell, author of an article on the SBC website, confirmed this perspective when he wrote

[C]hurches have the right and the responsibility when meeting in association or in convention to exclude those churches which severely violate commonly held

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<sup>50</sup> “Resolution on Ordination and the Role of Women in Ministry,” Official Website of the Southern Baptist Convention, <http://sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=1088> (accessed May 8, 2011).

<sup>51</sup> “About Us: Frequently Asked Questions,” Southern Baptist Convention, <http://www.sbc.net/aboutus/faqs.asp#9> (accessed February 12, 2010).

<sup>52</sup> “About Us: Frequently Asked Questions,” Southern Baptist Convention, <http://www.sbc.net/aboutus/faqs.asp#2> (accessed December 12, 2010).

doctrines. The autonomy of the local church does not empower one local church to force its aberrant views on all the other local churches.<sup>53</sup>

Also using the order of creation as an argument against the ordination of women Yarnell wrote, “In the late twentieth century, some Southern Baptists also considered the novel idea of ordaining female pastors. Although the concept was culturally vogue, it contradicts biblical precedent regarding order in creation and the church, and is thus firmly denied in our confession.”<sup>54</sup> Conservatives also use 1 Timothy 3:2 as a foundation for this prohibition: “An overseer, therefore, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, self-controlled, sensible, respectable, and hospitable, an able teacher.” (Holman Christian Standard Bible [HCSB][translation commissioned by the SBC and recognized in a 1988 resolution].) Note how the SBC-commissioned Bible chooses to use the term “overseer,” a word that connotes one who carries out the rules of a superior. “Bishop,” the traditional *koine* Greek term in the Bible used in 1 Timothy 3:2 also means “overseer” but has the denotation of “presbyter,” meaning “the chief pastor of an area with responsibility for guiding the church’s work. Later [in church history], the bishop gained pastoral oversight of a specific geographical area.”<sup>55</sup>

Another resolution, passed in 1988, on the “Priesthood of the Believer” weakened the autonomy of the local church as well as the principle of the priesthood of the believer. It

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<sup>53</sup> Malcolm Yarnell, “Which Denomination, Which Convention? Recognizing and Evaluating the Issues,” *Journal of the Southern Baptist Convention* (December 2004): <http://www.sbclife.net/Articles/2004/12/sla8.asp> (accessed March 13, 2010).

<sup>54</sup> Malcolm Yarnell, “The Church,” in Blount and Wooddell, *Baptist Faith and Message 2000*, 63.

<sup>55</sup> Donald K. McKim, “Bishop,” *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*, Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1996, 30.

did this by elevating the status of the pastor above that of the congregation. The resolution stated in part:

WHEREAS, The doctrine of the priesthood of the believer has been used to justify wrongly the attitude that a Christian may believe whatever he so chooses and still be considered a loyal Southern Baptist; and

WHEREAS, The doctrine of the priesthood of the believer can be used to justify the undermining of pastoral authority in the local church.

Be it...RESOLVED, That we affirm that this doctrine in no way gives license to misinterpret, explain away, demythologize, or extrapolate out elements of the supernatural from the Bible; and

Be it further RESOLVED, That the doctrine of the priesthood of the believer in no way contradicts the biblical understanding of the role, responsibility, and authority of the pastor which is seen in the command to the local church in Hebrews 13:17, "Obey your leaders, and submit to them; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account;" and

Be it finally RESOLVED, That we affirm the truth that elders, or pastors, are called of God to lead the local church (Acts 20:28).

The concept of the priesthood of the believers (or the priesthood of the believer, as progressives phrase it) comes from 1 Peter 2: 4-6:

Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in scripture: "See, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame." (New Revised Standard Version)

Jesus is the foundation of the church and we are the stones – the “living stones” – which build the church. Christ is the head of the church but we are the “holy priesthood,” all of us authorized to take our offerings and sacrifices to him. Martin Luther expounded on

this verse and taught the principle of a general priesthood, all of us “equally priests,”<sup>56</sup> as a protest against the Roman Church’s hierarchical church control.<sup>57</sup> His treatise “On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church” called for Christians to break away from the “tyranny” of the Church and for the Mass to be restored to the laity.<sup>58</sup> In the present day this principle is known as “the priesthood of all believers.” Baptists apply the principle to the congregations, granting individuals the right to interpret scripture and control their churches.<sup>59</sup> Walter B. Shurden’s definition of the priesthood of the believer is “the historic Baptist affirmation of the inalienable right and responsibility of every person to deal with God without the imposition of creed, the interference of clergy, or the intervention of civil government.”<sup>60</sup> Individual Baptists interpret scripture for themselves; the pastor does not dictate interpretation. Additionally, all members of a Southern Baptist church are equal. This means equal with the pastor. There is no “pastoral authority.” Southern Baptists don’t have bishops or popes or other church authorities for a reason: the “sacredness of individual choice.”<sup>61</sup> The church members are the authority. Using a democratic process they “call” (hire) whomever they want for

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<sup>56</sup> Martin Luther, *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, trans. A. T. W. Steinhäuser, Frederick C. Aherns, and Abdel Ross Wentz, 64.  
<http://www.vasynod.org/files/BibleStudy/GreatestHits/VOL%2036%20THE%20BABYLONIAN%20CAPTIVITY%20OF%20THE%20CHURCH.pdf> (accessed April 14, 2012).

<sup>57</sup> Robert G. Torbet, *A History of the Baptists*, 3 ed. (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1973), 517.

<sup>58</sup> Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther: His Road to Reformation, 1483 - 1521*, trans. James L. Schaaf (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), <http://www.theworldsgreatbooks.com/luther.htm> (accessed March 10, 2012).

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Shurden, *The Baptist Identity: Four Fragile Freedoms*, 23.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

a pastor. They own their church building. They govern themselves through a church council and/or a group of ordained deacons. These groups make motions that are taken to the entire church for a vote. For a resolution to say that the pastor is the “authority” of the church goes against everything Southern Baptist.

Note, too, as mentioned in the discussion on the BGF2000 Preamble, that today’s SBC no longer uses the phrase which was the title of the 1988 resolution “The Priesthood of the Believer.” Rather, it uses “Priesthood of All Believers,”<sup>62</sup> the phrase Cartledge says de-emphasizes individual freedom.

#### Article XV: The Christian and the Social Order

Language was added to BFM2000 which clearly lays out the new SBC’s position on homosexuality:

<b>BFM1963</b>	<b>BFM2000</b>
The Christian should oppose in the spirit of Christ every form of greed, selfishness, and vice. He should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the aged, the helpless, and the sick.	In the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice, and <b>all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography.</b> We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick.

Conservatives consider homosexuality to be a “choice,” a “chosen lifestyle of many in this moral decline.”<sup>63</sup> In other words homosexuality is a temptation which can be fought through prayer and scripture. Anyone who “chooses” homosexuality can choose to leave

<sup>62</sup> Position Statements: Priesthood of All Believers,” Official Website of the Southern Baptist Convention, <http://sbc.net/aboutus/pspriesthood.asp> (accessed January 18, 2012).

<sup>63</sup> “Resolution on Homosexuality,” The Official Website of the Southern Baptist Convention, <http://sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=610> (accessed May 12, 2011).



the lifestyle. Homosexuality is regarded as a “sin” although not an “unpardonable” sin, according to the SBC Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) president, Richard Land.<sup>64</sup> Conservatives perpetuate a fear of homosexuality to advance an anti-gay agenda in the SBC. A 1988 resolution on homosexuality states in part:

this deviant behavior has wrought havoc in the lives of millions...[homosexuals] are justified and even glorified in our secular media...and homosexual activity is the primary cause of the introduction and spread of AIDS in the United States which has not only affected those of the homosexual community, but also many innocent victims.<sup>65</sup>

The resolution doesn’t indicate who the “innocent victims” are but the implication is that homosexuals and their “deviant behavior” are a threat to every Southern Baptist.

Another example of how Southern Baptist conservatives use fear of homosexuals is a resolution in opposition to the federal Employment Non-discrimination Act (ENDA). ENDA has come before the United States Congress in various versions since 1994 but has not yet been passed into law. Nonetheless, a 2010 SBC resolution attacked the proposed law on the grounds that it would violate the First Amendment rights of separation of church and state. The resolution claims that the religious exemption in the bill only referred to the hiring of ministers and would not protect businesses with a “religious character.”<sup>66</sup> In fact, the law exempts any “corporation, association, educational institution or society” which has as its primary purpose “religious ritual or

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<sup>64</sup> Richard Land, “Homosexuality Quick Facts: Reliable and Informative Snapshots of the Focus Issue,” The Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, <http://erlc.com/issues/quick-facts/homosexuality/> (accessed March 25, 2012).

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Resolution on the Employment Non-Discrimination Act,” Official Website of the Southern Baptist Convention, <http://sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=1209> (accessed March 31, 2012).

worship.”<sup>67</sup> However, the resolution instills the fear that if ENDA passes Congress then Southern Baptist businesses (LifeWay bookstores, for instance) will have to hire homosexuals or be in violation of the law.

Changes in the Baptist Faith and Messages and the acceptance of resolutions as mandates have led to anti-gay actions by the Southern Baptist Convention. Among these actions is the unprecedented step of changing the SBC Bylaws regarding church membership. The Southern Baptist Convention will now oust churches which are in any way gay-friendly. This change and others will be discussed further in Chapter 4.

#### Article XVIII: The Family

In 1998 “Article XVIII: The Family” was amended to BFM1963 and remained unchanged in BFM2000. One sentence has stood out above all others and created a firestorm of criticism: “A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ.” The amendment is based on the SBC’s interpretation of Ephesians 5:22 – 24: “Wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord, for the husband is head of the wife as also Christ is head of the church. He is the Savior of the body. Now as the church submits to Christ, so wives should [submit] to their husbands in everything” (HCSB). Much of the criticism centered on the fact that nowhere in Article XVIII is it mentioned that the verse prior to this, Ephesians 5:21, reads as follows: “submitting to one another in the fear of Christ” (HCSB). In other words, the Bible does not teach only submission by the wife to

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<sup>67</sup> Richard R. Hammar, “The Employment Nondiscrimination Act of 2007: Will the proposed new bill affect your church employment practices?” *Christianity Today*, February 28, 2008, 1-3 <http://www.christianitytoday.com/cbg/churchlawtaxupdate/thememploymentnondiscrimact.html> (accessed March 31, 2012).

the husband but submission by the husband to the wife. This distinction was not made part of the article.

Dorothy Patterson (wife of Paige Patterson) was on the committee which drafted this article. She wrote the chapter in the conservative commentary on BFM2000. She states, “A wife who wants to honor Christ will choose to stand under her husband’s authority – not because of his merit but because she wants to be obedient to Christ...Submission should be a wife’s natural response to her husband’s love and a prerequisite to his headship.”<sup>68</sup> “*Not because of his merit.*” (The emphasis is mine.) This means that whether or not the husband is worthy or qualified to have authority over the wife she must let him. A Bible study published by LifeWay, a company of the SBC, puts the emphasis of this passage on the marital relationship and says that some women “seek to dismiss the command in 5:22 as reflecting the culture of Paul’s day, not God’s plan for marriage.”<sup>69</sup> Women are told that submission is voluntary and that this verse does not say women are inferior to men. Rather, the study refers back to 5:21 where “being ready to forego one’s own ideas or desires out of love for one’s brothers and sisters” in 5:22 specifically applies to Christian wives.<sup>70</sup> Women are also told, “The Lord’s call for wives to submit to husbands is a word of love, as are all His commands. Instead of

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<sup>68</sup> Dorothy Kelley Patterson, “The Family,” in Blount and Wooddell, *Baptist Faith and Message 2000*, 189.

<sup>69</sup> LifeWay Press, ed., *Ephesians: God’s Spiritual People (LifeWay In-Depth Bible Study)* (Nashville: LifeWay Church Resources, 2006), 171.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

diminishing wives' joy or personal fulfillment, we will see that it benefits wives and blesses their marriages.”<sup>71</sup>

Moderates maintain that conservatives are wrong in saying interpretation of Ephesians 5 should not reflect the culture of Paul's time. Moderates also maintain that Article XVIII: The Family and Dorothy Patterson are wrong in saying women should submit to their husbands. A study of Ephesians 5 using the historical-critical method of Bible study counters the conservative's more literal interpretation. During the time of Paul's writing of Ephesians women had no status comparable to what we have now. The man was the unquestioned head of the household, with authority over women, children, and slaves. However, Paul introduces a sense of reciprocity unusual in Roman-Greco households. Also, Paul adds a Christological component of mutual submission out of “fear of Christ.”<sup>72</sup> The relationship is compared to that of Christ and the church. “The exhortation is not for the husband to rule his wife, which one might have expected after the earlier appeal for wives to submit, but to love.”<sup>73</sup> The way in which women are unequal in today's Southern Baptist Convention will be discussed further in Chapter 4.

Dr. Richard Land Comments on the Changes<sup>74</sup>

I thought it would be important to hear what a conservative had to say about the changes to the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message so I reached out to Dr. Richard Land,

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> David B. Howell, *Ephesians: God Calls a New People* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 1996), 100.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, 101.

<sup>74</sup> Richard Land, edited interview response, February 3, 2012.

current president of the Southern Baptist Convention Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission and a member of the committee which drafted the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message. It was not my intention to debate Dr. Land but to allow him the chance to answer to the criticism of moderates. He was most cordial and gracious and though I disagreed with most of what he said, especially his new definition of the autonomy of the local church, we had a lovely conversation. What I write in the next few pages are his views, not mine. Many of the changes we discuss are monumental and, as I have said, mostly antithetical to what I claim and have demonstrated are more authentic Baptist beliefs. I've tried very hard to maintain the integrity of the discussion without the space here to cover the full context of our interview.

We began the conversation with a discussion regarding the reasons why the Southern Baptist Convention drafted a new Baptist Faith and Message. Dr. Land said there was a need to address issues that were not issues in 1963 such as abortion, the sanctity of life, pornography, homosexuality, and the ability to address racism (an issue for which the Convention would not have been able to achieve a majority in 1963). Dr. Land went on to say that a new BFM was needed also to counter the attempt in the seminaries to “elevate the New Testament Gospels above the teachings of the apostle Paul.”<sup>75</sup> He used homosexuality as an example because one of his seminary professors had argued that it shouldn't be an issue since Jesus never addressed it. That professor went on to say that even though Paul did address homosexuality his words didn't carry the same authority as the words of Jesus. Dr. Land argued that such thinking was the means by which

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<sup>75</sup> Richard Land, edited interview by author, February 3, 2012. All subsequent quotes are from the same interview.

moderates were using the criterion statement of BFM1963 to elevate the Gospels above the Epistles. In the view of the committee such thinking also contradicted Jesus own words recorded in John 16:12: “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.” (King James Version [KJV].) Dr. Land reported, as if fact, that for thirty years the moderates had been using the criterion statement to “denigrate the apostle Paul and other Epistles to secondary status” and the conservatives were not going to put up with it anymore. So, they “closed that loophole” by changing the wording of the criterion statement.

I next asked Dr. Land what he thought was meant by “doctrinal accountability” since moderates claim this phrases makes the BFM2000 creedal. Dr. Land commented that this phrase meant the BFM2000 had the “pedagogical function” of telling the world what Baptists believe, what the doctrines are that Baptists assert, and how to identify oneself as a Baptist. People have the right to believe whatever they like, Dr. Land continued. They just can’t believe whatever they like and call themselves “Southern Baptist.” He said only Southern Baptists have the right to define “Southern Baptist” and that’s what “doctrinal accountability” means to the SBC.

Addressing the charge that the phrase “doctrinal accountability” makes the BFM2000 “creedal” Dr. Land maintained that it was not creedal because Southern Baptists go out of their way to make sure confessions aren’t confused with scripture. A confession is a statement of what they believe. Each Southern Baptist group (local church, local association, state convention, national convention) is autonomous and decides for itself who has “crossed the bar” of what is Southern Baptist. He gave the example of a

Mississippi Baptist church which stopped requiring baptism by immersion following a person's profession of faith. The church had the right to do this, he said, but the church didn't have the right to do it and call itself Southern Baptist. For a Southern Baptist group to decide not to be in association with such a church is not a violation of the autonomy of the local church. A violation of the autonomy of the local church would be if the Southern Baptist Convention went into that church and forcibly tried to change what the local church practiced. Dr. Land went on to say that the local church doesn't have authority over the Convention either. The Southern Baptist Convention is also autonomous. It's called a "convention" because it's a convention of churches for which membership is voluntary. "It's never been about the autonomy of the local church," said Dr. Land. "That's always been a canard by the moderates and it shows that they're either being dishonest or they just don't understand what autonomy is."

About the change to "priesthood of the believers" Dr. Land was very direct. He said the phrase originated with Martin Luther and the committee felt that using the new phrase was more consistent and was the "corporate sense" of the use. He did not elaborate about what he meant by "corporate sense."

I continued the interview by asking Dr. Land for his definition of "inerrancy." "It's very simple: the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter. Therefore, all scripture is totally true and trustworthy." As to why the word "inerrancy" was left out of the BFM2000 he commented that the committee felt the definition in the

1963 Baptist Faith and Message already described inerrancy and to use the word would be redundant. Moreover, to add it would have given moderates the chance to say the conservatives had only done that because the definition already in place wasn't inerrancy.

Our discussion then turned to the change in the article on the Church regarding the role of the pastor. He said the change was based on the committee's understanding of scripture and it *was* their intent to make the pastor the authority of the church. He quoted Hebrews 13:7: "Remember them which have rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation" (KJV). The Greek word *hegeomai* is used for the word "rule" and there's no question it means authority. He went on to quote verse 17 in the same chapter which says, "Obey them which have rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls, and they that must give account that they may do it with joy, and not with grief, for that is unprofitable to you." According to Dr. Land, pastors will be judged by a different standard because they will have to give account to God for their care of the souls entrusted to them. "We don't think that the members of the church are equally responsible so we changed it to what we believe and what we think most Baptists believe."

I mentioned that the change in the Baptist Faith and Message limiting the office of pastor to men was counter to the general trend in other denominations. I asked if he thought, therefore, that the Southern Baptist view on women in ministry would change. Dr. Land stated that this change was the least controversial of any the committee made to BFM2000 because it's quite clear in the pastoral epistles that a woman is not to have



authority over men. However, he continued, it refers to a church context and most Southern Baptists (himself included) do not extrapolate this admonition from the church to anywhere else. For instance, the head of the Washington office of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission was a woman until she resigned to take care of her special needs child. In addition, Dr. Land maintained that he had no problem with women administrators and professors at seminaries. The difference was that scripture refers to the local church. “And I think we have to be careful not to go beyond what scripture does.” When I asked why then, after the takeover, had so many woman professors been ousted for being female? He responded that most of them weren’t ousted. Rather, they had left on their own. Or, if they were ousted it was because of their theology and not their gender.

Remaining on the subject of gender I asked why churches were being disfellowshipped by the Southern Baptist Convention for ordaining women. The SBC still claims autonomy of the local church as a tenet and I felt this practice violated that tenet. Dr. Land argued it was not necessarily true that the SBC was disfellowshipping churches. He said it was a decision to be made by each Baptist fellowship group. If the group didn’t believe ordaining a woman was Baptist practice they had the right to cease association with that church. He repeated that this practice did not violate the autonomy of the church because none of the fellowship groups were going into that church and removing the woman who was pastor.

I pointed out to Dr. Land that even though I am an ordained Southern Baptist minister, because I’m a lesbian if I were to join any Southern Baptist church that church

would be disfellowshipped from the SBC. I knew his stance on why this didn't violate the autonomy of that church so I inquired about the change in the SBC constitution regarding "friendly cooperation."<sup>76</sup> He said that was the only time in history that the Southern Baptist Convention had changed its constitutional bylaws regarding membership. The revision had to be voted on by messengers at the annual meeting two consecutive years and the vote was ninety-seven or ninety-eight percent in favor of the change. He was clear that this showed an overwhelming majority of Southern Baptists believe homosexual activity is "beyond the pale of acceptable, moral behavior." Since he used the phrase "homosexual activity" I countered this implied that a celibate homosexual could be accepted. He replied that perhaps "a celibate homosexual who acknowledges that homosexuality was not biblical." Dr. Land stated that he believed homosexuals could be changed and quoted from 1 Corinthians 6: "Neither the effeminate nor the abusers of themselves with mankind shall inherit the kingdom of God and such were some of you. *But you've been changed*," he said with emphasis. He continued, "You've been washed. You've been cleansed. So when the American Psychiatric Association says homosexuals can't change their basic orientation that's above their pay grade."

I quoted to Dr. Land the passage from Dorothy Patterson's essay where she said a woman should want to be under her husband's authority "not because of his merit" but out of obedience to Christ. I asked him, "If the husband has no merit, is totally unworthy, the wife still must be submissive?" He thought I was missing the point. Mrs. Patterson's

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<sup>76</sup> In 1993 the Southern Baptist Convention changed its bylaws to exclude churches "which act to affirm, approve, or endorse homosexual behavior." See Chapter 4 for more information.

point is that submission has nothing to do with the husband but with being obedient to Christ. The same language and verb tense (middle voice reflexive) is used in Hebrews 13 (quoted above regarding the authority of the pastor in the church). Land quoted Paul's admonition to the husband, "love the wife as Christ loved the church," where the word *agape* is used for "love". Dr. Land believes 1 Corinthians 13 is our "divine essay" on *agape* and a description of the self-sacrificial love with which Christ loves us. It's the kind of love where a husband's responsibility is to put the needs of the wife above his own. The wife's responsibility is to put herself under the authority of her husband. "It has nothing to do with superiority and inferiority. Jesus is equal with God the Father, but he submits himself to God the Father. 'Nevertheless not my will but they will be done.' It has nothing to do with equality."

I didn't feel Dr. Land had addressed the issue of merit so I asked again, "If the husband truly doesn't have merit, must the wife submit?" His response was that in a marriage someone has to be in charge and God has says that's to be the husband. The husband is responsible for the spiritual health of the family and God is going to hold him more accountable than the wife. I continued to press, asking, "So if the husband doesn't have merit the wife is just to put up with him?" "And pray for him," Dr. Land added. "Win him without a word" but with a change in behavior. "There's no relationship so broken God can't heal it." In the end, I never felt he had answered my question about why a wife should submit to a husband with no merit.

We ended our conversation by discussing the takeover itself. In 1976 Dr. Land wrote an article for a British Baptist paper on the rise of the Southern Baptist Convention. In

the article he noted Southern Baptists were having an ongoing discussion about how broadly the parameters of the definition of “Southern Baptist” could be stretched. He wrote that he believed the parameters had been stretched beyond that which was sustainable over time and there would be a contraction “either by hemorrhaging from the right or bleeding from the left.” Dr. Land told me if the moderates had won, the SBC would have lost three or four million people, including the churches of Adrian Rogers and Charles Stanley.

“So you don’t think it [the SBC] would have gone as before, the ‘agreeing to disagree’?” I asked. He thought not; that a false analogy which is sometimes drawn compares the SBC the way it is now to the way it was. “Had there not been a conservative resurgence the conservatives would have left and there would be virtually no difference between Southern Baptists today and the mainline denominations. They would be a shadow of their former self.” According to Dr. Land, Adrian Rogers had commented at the time, “We’ll give it a shot but if it doesn’t turn around, we’re gone. We’re not going to support that which we believe is unconscionable.” There were Baptists who believed so steadfastly in inerrancy that they didn’t want to congregate with anyone who didn’t. In addition, there were Baptists who believed in inerrancy but were willing to work with those who didn’t. The goal of the “resurgence” of the SBC, according to Dr. Land, was to unite these conservatives, understanding that theological differences could be worked out. Those who believed anything else “needed to find somewhere else to go because they were beyond the parameters” of conservatives beliefs.

## Summary of the Conversation with Dr. Land

My conversation with Dr. Land substantiated what was written earlier in this thesis about the changes to the Baptist Faith and Message – they were substantial, theology-changing, and far removed from traditional Southern Baptist tenets. Christ no longer is the criterion upon which scripture is interpreted. According to conservatives, this keeps Paul's writings from being "denigrated to secondary status." The Baptist Faith and Message is a statement with "doctrinal accountability" so as to define a Southern Baptist. The SBC is no longer "about the autonomy of the local church." Pastors are now the head of the church; there is no congregational equality. The Southern Baptist Convention, state conventions, local associations, and local churches are free to disfellowship churches which ordain women. Priesthood of the believers is phrased in the plural to be the "corporate sense" of the phrase. A wife's Christian duty is to put herself under the authority of her husband regardless of his merit.

In total contradiction to what it means to be Southern Baptist, these changes were forced upon the members of the Convention. Members who wouldn't accept the changes, who stood firm in their belief and training of what it meant to be a Southern Baptist, were ousted or chased away. In the next section I will share the story of some of these former Southern Baptists.

### Chapter 3: Case Studies and Histories of Those Who Had to ‘Find Somewhere Else to Go’

Growing up Southern Baptist once seemed relatively easy. Elaborate denominational programs created a surprising uniformity among an otherwise diverse and highly individualistic constituency. In churches throughout the American South, Southern Baptist young people were taught how to behave in the church and in the world, on Sundays and throughout the week.

– Bill Leonard in *God’s Last and Only Hope*<sup>77</sup>

Members of the Southern Baptist Convention were affected many different ways by the conservative takeover. Some people, especially at the local church level, were affected minimally. Most widely affected were women, those within the LGBT community, and moderates and progressives. These Baptists were hurt deeply, lost positions, and were generally chased away from the SBC.

I’ve often wondered where I would be if the takeover had never happened. I wondered, too, where my friends and classmates would be. I got a first-hand look at where we *weren’t* when, in 2006, the SBC’s annual meeting was held in my home state of North Carolina. At that time my home church, Longview, still had loose ties to the SBC so my mother and I were able to attend the meeting as official messengers. Over the course of the convention I ran into several former seminary classmates, mostly men. We exchanged pleasantries and caught up on where our lives had taken us since graduation. It struck me – not in a good way – that only my male classmates still had positions – ministers, chaplains, and professors in the SBC. The few female classmates I encountered were married to the ministers, chaplains, and professors. For all intent and purposes women were invisible in the leadership of the SBC. But women had been

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<sup>77</sup> Leonard, *God’s Last and Only Hope*, 1.

leaders. They'd been ordained. They'd served as pastors, professors, and chaplains.

Where were they now?

Further, before the takeover openly gay and lesbian people had been accepted and affirmed by many Southern Baptist churches. LGBT people had been ordained and had commitment ceremonies in Southern Baptist churches. Closeted gays and lesbians had been encouraged by these advancements. Where were the LGBT Southern Baptists now? Similarly, where were the ones who fought for academic freedom in the seminaries? Who fought for the equality of women in the church? Who had firmly believed in the autonomy of the local church and the priesthood of the believer? Where were the ones who argued that a person's call to the ministry was between that person and God and had nothing to do with gender or sexual orientation?

To fully grasp the impact of the takeover, it is important to know the stories of some of the persons whose careers were deeply affected or even destroyed by the conservative takeover. I have reached out to a couple of high profile Southern Baptists and to some personal friends. I wanted the "before and after" told so I presented to them a series of questions which I hoped would allow them to tell their story. Here are their responses as a means of sharing the stories of some of those who God called as ministers and those who Dr. Land said "needed to find somewhere else to go" because they did not fall in line with the new conservative leaders of the SBC.

Reverend Dr. W. Randall Lolley<sup>78</sup>

We struggled gallantly together so long as there seemed to be any chance to prevail and preserve our collective vision for the seminary. When the alien vision of the new majority gained ascendancy we decided to resign rather than to capitulate – to go with our principles rather than with our positions. There was no chance to negotiate a mutual vision with the new majority. Their agenda was set against it.

– W. Randall Lolley in *Servant Songs*<sup>79</sup>

I have met only a few people in my life who I would describe as totally genuine and Randall Lolley is one of them. Everything about him is sincere, from his faith to his love of others. He is a warm, caring person. A person cannot know him without believing he was truly called by God; the consummate pastor. He never sought power; he was sought. He was also one of the Southern Baptist Convention's great academic minds whose entire higher education was Southern Baptist. He received his B.A. from Howard College (now Samford University), his B.D. and Th.M. from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, and his Ph.D. from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Dr. Lolley was president at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary during my years there. He was our president and he was also our pastor. The students – their lives and their studies – were always his first priority. He made sure students “were full partners in the teaching-learning experience.”<sup>80</sup> He made changes to improve our campus life. Dorms were remodeled and air-conditioned, married student housing was increased, the cafeteria was renovated, and student fees were kept as low as possible. An open

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<sup>78</sup> W. Randall Lolley, Questionnaire: “SBC Takeover and Impact.” Edited Interview Response, July 25, 2011.

<sup>79</sup> W. Randall Lolley, “Years of Pleasure and Pain,” in Bland, *Servant Songs*, 68.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, 36.



monthly forum allowed students to bring their concerns directly to the president. Student enrollment doubled during his tenure, peaking at 1392 students.

Dr. Lolley has been an outspoken proponent of women in the ministry, including the right of women to be ordained and serve as pastors. While he was president of Southeastern a Women's Resource Center was developed there. In addition, Lana Lawrence was elected as the first female student body president among all the seminaries. As president of the Student Government Association she accompanied Dr. Lolley to the spring meeting of the Executive Committee in Nashville where she was received with "great welcome." Dr. Lolley said her election was seen by many as "a wave of the future."<sup>81</sup> In addition, he reported that "Southeastern led in gender equality issues during that period and remains to this day one of the accomplishments for which I am most grateful."<sup>82</sup>

I have many memories of Dr. Lolley from my seminary days but two stand out. The first involved a student who felt God was calling her to be a minister. She didn't have money for both tuition and the dorm so she was living out of her car. When Dr. Lolley heard about this he immediately made sure money was found and she was placed in a dorm. The other memory involves the terror of exposure I lived under while in seminary. I was not the only closeted gay at SEBTS during that time. Word had gotten out that gays were there and someone complained to Dr. Lolley. Although I'm not sure what was said during that conversation legend has it that Dr. Lolley refused to start a "witch hunt." Whatever happened, no investigation occurred.

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<sup>81</sup> W. Randall Lolley, email message to author, January 19, 2012.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

Dr. Lolley said SEBT's purpose for having a president was "to help teachers teach and students to learn."<sup>83</sup> To that end, he assembled a faculty of world-class minds and the size of the full-time faculty increased from twenty-four to thirty-eight. Some of those professors that I had were John I. Durham, John Eddins, Richard Spencer, and Elmo Scoggin. In addition, a treasure of adjunct professors enriched the teaching pool. A "Jewish Faith and Folk" class I took was taught by a local rabbi. One of my pastoral care courses was taught by a local hospital chaplain. Other adjunct faculty included Methodists who taught Methodist polity and a Roman Catholic who taught Catholicism since Vatican II.<sup>84</sup> All in all, Dr. Lolley initiated a "shared governance" model in which trustees, faculty, administration, students, and alumni were all involved in the administration of the school. Faculty had a large say in the school curriculum and in the hiring of other professors. The dispute with the new SBC leadership over the role of faculty in hiring decisions had a large role in Dr. Lolley's decision to resign as SEBTS president in 1988. Here is Dr. Lolley's response to my questions:

*When did you know you were called to the ministry? What role did you see yourself having as a Southern Baptist minister? How did you prepare for the ministry? What were your future career plans?*

I was a product of the youth revival movement of the mid-late forties, just as WWII was ending. The whole country was caught up in the youth revival movement which originated at Baylor University. Several teams of gifted and talented ministers would go out in the summers all over the south giving revivals directed to youth twelve to twenty years of age. When they came to my part of Alabama a religious fervor like I have never

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<sup>83</sup> W. Randall Lolley, "Years of Pleasure and Pain," in Bland, *Servant Songs*, 35.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, 36.

seen swept the south. I graduated from high school in 1949 and became part of the youth revival team. I wasn't a preacher or a singer; I was director of activities – I cut the watermelon!

After high school I enrolled at Howard College (now Samford University), a four-year Baptist college in Birmingham, as a history and psychology major. During my freshman year two men in overalls approached me about becoming pastor of their church, Reece Baptist. It was a new church; they had bought a school house as a worship building. The men knew of me from my work in the youth revival teams but they didn't know I was a watermelon cutter! It was a 200 mile drive one-way from Birmingham; 400 miles each trip. Fortunately it was only two weekends a month. Since I was still new in college I was able to shift direction and add education to my degree and get a teaching certificate (instead of studying preaching as others did).

During college I met Lou and we were married shortly after I graduated. I decided to do at least one year of teaching at Starke University School (a boys' military high school) while Lou finished college. When Lou finished she started teaching, too, so we stayed one more year.

In 1954 I enrolled at Southeastern.

As for the role I saw for myself as a Southern Baptist minister, from the get-go I had a feeling I might want to become a pastor or a teacher; that's why I chose a well-rounded degree. I finished with a minor in history and a major in psychology. I loved teaching so when I went to seminary I was convinced I needed to prepare myself for either teaching

or being a pastor. When I finished my Bachelor of Divinity degree I stayed at Southeastern and finished my Master of Theology.

I had always wanted to get a doctorate, and decided I wanted to finish that before I went back to work, so I planned to enroll at Southern Baptist Seminary. This was during the McCall spat, however, and thirteen professors had left the school all at once. (Note: Duke K. McCall became president of Southern Seminary in 1951. In 1958 thirteen professors resigned in protest of his administrative style.)<sup>85</sup> Consequently, Southern was put on probation by its accrediting agency. The accreditors didn't allow Southern to accept new graduate students for three years after this so I switched to Southwestern Baptist Seminary. While at Southwestern I was associate pastor at Broadway Baptist Church, a large church in Fort Worth, Texas. After I finished my Ph.D. I went back to North Carolina and became pastor of First Baptist Church in Winston-Salem, which at the time was the second or third largest Baptist church in North Carolina. (Charlotte First is larger and Greensboro First also may be larger.) I was there from 1962 until 1974 when Southeastern called me to be their third president. (Dr. Sydnor L. Stealey and Dr. Olin T. Binkley were the first two.) I think I got the call because I was an alumnus but I wouldn't have gotten it had I not prepared by earning a doctorate.

*Where were you in your career path in 1979? When did you first realize the conservatives had taken control of the Southern Baptist Convention?*

In 1979 I was still president at Southeastern. As president I saw things happening in the SBC before most others saw them happening. Very few knew how dramatically

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<sup>85</sup> Bill J. Leonard. "Southern Baptist Theological Seminary." In *Encyclopedia of Religious Controversies in the United States*, eds. George H. Shriver and Bill J. Leonard (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1997), 445 - 446.

things were changing. At Southeastern we had gotten a wave of a new kind of student. These students didn't come from Baptist "feeder" schools but from independent schools: Oral Roberts, Liberty, and Bob Jones. The changes were noted at the Executive Committee meetings which were held in Nashville four times a year and were mandatory for Southern Baptist agency heads. We began to compare notes and saw changes in the classroom. We found out that the students were being encouraged to send notes to Texas – to Paige Patterson – about every little thing happening at seminaries. Paige Patterson and Paul Pressler started having clandestine meetings so by 1979 they were very organized.

I didn't think the Convention of 1979 was going to be fatal but it was a wake-up call. I went to every convention through 1988 because I was still president at Southeastern though by 1980 or 1981 it had become apparent that we moderates wouldn't be able to turn the tide. The conservatives had the voters and the president who could make critical appointments and control where the conventions were held, which was just as close to Texas as possible so they could use the network of fundamentalist churches in Texas.

I don't know if we thought we could eventually take back the Convention, but a group – particularly those in seminaries – felt it wasn't best to put all our eggs in one basket and regain control. They saw problems and a hardening of attitudes in the SBC...toward Christian women, for instance. We felt the best way was to start something fresh and new, something which eventually flavored my decision to resign from Southeastern. Conservatives gained a one vote majority on the SEBTS Board and one week later I resigned. I didn't tell anyone I was going to resign except my wife. By

then we had had enough conversation to know there was enough sentiment to begin a fresh movement in the southeast: Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, a little in Arkansas and a little in Texas. Enough conversation with those we knew we could count on to come forward with a new approach to things, so I didn't resign in a vacuum. After all, I'd known for nine years the SBC was turning. Why try to save a flawed, never-again-to-be-different, Southern Baptist Convention? Why not start something new? We realized there were alternatives. This was the precursor to the Alliance of Baptists and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

It looked as if my resignation was sudden but I had thought a lot about it. If the trustees hadn't changed that year they would have changed later. I resigned because of dramatic changes in the makeup of the Board. Both the Chairman and the vice-chairman in 1979 were Bob Jones graduates.

One thing moderates did wrong: we should have begun to see if we could negotiate with the new SBC leaders for fair distribution of property that we had helped to buy. The story has not been told about how much money was in investments in properties overseas – missionary endeavors, seminaries, etc. The moderates just walked away from it. Most of the new leaders gave less than 1 – 2% of their mission money to the SBC. The moderates gave the money and the infrastructure. And the conservatives kept it all.

*What were your immediate thoughts following the Conventions of 1979 onward? If you were at any of the Conventions, please describe what you remember of the proceedings and your thoughts as they occurred.*

As to the final two conventions I ever attended, here is something of the year-long strategy that Patterson and Pressley developed for each annual convention where *all* trustees on *all* SBC agencies were elected by the messengers. First, they got extensive lists of the vacancies both in the State Conventions and in the SBC. They went across the convention setting up candidates for *every vacancy* who would promote the "takeover agenda." Since they already had the presidency sewed up, they simply began promoting the establishment candidate for president and HE (never she) went across the country for a year speaking to groups of pastors and laypersons. Second, they arranged the convention meetings in their stronghold cities where they could actually bus people in for the one Tuesday morning session when all the crucial leadership votes were taken. The halls would be filled for that session and for no other one during the week. They were unashamed that the "messengers" came for nothing else and likely did not care to vote on anything else in the life of the Convention. Then, in the third place they rigged the microphone system in the meeting hall so that the president could cut off anyone whom he desired to silence or to keep from being recognized to speak. They also had a convention control mechanism in place so that they could manage matters on the floor from the sky boxes in the convention meeting halls. Since the president was the presiding officer of the Convention in session according to the Bylaws, he controlled completely the action on the floor. In addition they controlled the seating in the hall near the microphones so that very seldom did any moderate person be recognized or heard. You see, these people were very politically astute since some of them had been active in their local politics (both sacred and secular) for some time.

*What was the first impact the takeover had on your personal life? On your career?*

First, I was teetotally and absolutely out of work for the first time in my life. When I resigned from Southeastern in October 1988 I had no notion what I would do next. I was 57, Lou wasn't working then, and we had daughters in college. I had resigned because I knew I had to and that was all that mattered. Within days after my resignation the chairman of the pastor search committee for First Baptist in Raleigh, Charles Barham, called and asked if he could come to Wake Forest to talk to me. I didn't know when he first called that he was coming to talk about the opening. But he asked if he could present my name to the committee, then to the church if the committee agreed. I had thought about looking into getting back into a school but I told him yes and they called me to be their pastor. At the time, First Baptist Raleigh was among the largest in North Carolina. Looking back, it was probably a mistake to take a job that close to SEBTS. Hardly a day went by without someone wanting to talk about Southeastern...press, faculty at SEBTS, church members, friends, etc. It led me to preach a sermon about the relationship between proximity and pain. This sermon eventually made me decide that I needed to leave that church (though in my retirement years it is where I still have my membership). I went to First Baptist Greensboro as pastor where I remained until I retired in 1996.

The effect the takeover had on my career was that it opened the way for me to be pastor of two of North Carolina's largest and finest churches. Out of the five largest – First Baptists in Winston-Salem, Raleigh, Asheville, Greensboro, and Charlotte – I was



pastor of three of them. My ministry would have been weakened without the privilege of serving these churches.

If I could have had the Board I wanted at SEBTS, I never would have left. I loved being there and working with pastors. Nonetheless, I don't feel short-changed. I feel my life has been enhanced.

*Where are you today? What led you this point? What path do you think your career would have taken had the takeover never occurred?*

As I mentioned, I retired in 1996. We built a house in and moved to Raleigh. I began thinking, however, that I was healthy, so I talked to Roger Nix, Director of Missions for the Raleigh Baptist Association, about being an interim pastor. It wasn't my goal to be an intentional interim which helped troubled churches; I just wanted to be a "plain, old fashioned, vanilla" interim. I've had twelve interim positions. The first was Snyder Memorial in Fayetteville, North Carolina, then First Baptist Church in Washington, DC. From there I went to Bay Shore Church in Tampa, Florida; Knollwood in Winston-Salem, North Carolina; then Hendricks Avenue in Jacksonville – the most moderate Baptist church in Florida. All the rest have been in North Carolina: Henderson, Rolesville, Tabernacle, Longview, Greystone – and presently – Crabtree Valley. Being an interim has been a delight and a joy. I wouldn't have missed it for anything!

Now that I'm retired I'm able to look back at the landscape without being too tied to it. I feel good about what happened in 1979. We had people, money, and visions to start something. Instead of six seminaries, we now have twelve – most of which are connected to long-standing universities and are strong. Also, women have options and get a fair break. Conservatives are welcome if they play fair and are not radicalized or

politicized. Students no longer need connections with Mr. or Mrs. “Big” to advance their careers. The years were painful but the outcome was not bad.

The thing that most people did not learn was that it only takes two things to get out of the SBC. One, stop going to annual conventions. That distances you. (I stopped going in 1988.) Two, stop sending them money. The SBC is a “bank” into which churches contribute mission funds and from that you get ministries and services. Things are done which individual churches can’t do alone. So the SBC is a people and resources “bank.” However, some churches will find they have other options. If they give to CBF-type churches they’ll see they don’t want to be in the SBC. The SBC is on the wrong side of most social issues, especially concerning Christian women. Any denomination that thinks half of God’s creation can’t serve is doomed to fail.

*Do you still consider yourself to be a Southern Baptist? If not, what do you consider yourself to be and why did you make that choice?*

As to being a Southern Baptist now, the short answer is NO. However, I am from the South (always have been) and I am very much *a Baptist* still. So in that generic sense I am a "southern Baptist."

As mentioned the only way officially to belong to the SBC is to do two things: attend the annual Conventions both State and National, register as a messenger and vote during the matters of business; and send *money* to the SBC. I do *not* go to the meetings now, nor do I send any funds to support the SBC. First Baptist Church, where Lou and I are now members, does not either. Thus, officially, I do not belong to the SBC. Actually, I was very active in the formation of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and if I were pushed

to describe myself presently on the national or state level, I would say that I am a member of the CBF national and CBFNC in this state.

Reverend Dr. Ginger Barfield<sup>86</sup>

I think there are a lot of students from Southeastern who never went into the ministry because of the takeover, thinking, “If this is what institutional ministry is like I want nothing to do with it!” I know the takeover broke up school friendships because we no longer had a community or common base.

– Ginger Barfield, unpublished data<sup>87</sup>

When my advisor and I discussed using case studies as part of my thesis I first thought of Ginger Barfield. Dr. Barfield and I were classmates at Southeastern Seminary and it was apparent to me early in our friendship that she was one of the most intelligent people I had ever met. Her extraordinary intelligence was not lost on the faculty. She became a teaching assistant (TA) to our New Testament professor when his Th.M. student dropped out of school – a position uncommon for an M.Div. student.

Dr. Barfield, as in all my case studies, was a cradle Southern Baptist. She attended Winthrop College (now Winthrop University) in Rock Hill, South Carolina, graduating *magna cum laude* in 1977 earning a B.S. with Departmental Honors in Physical Education. She taught and coached high school students for a couple of years before going off to seminary. She graduated from Southeastern in 1982 with an M.Div. with Languages degree and did post-graduate research in New Testament Theology and Interpretation there from 1982 to 1984. In 2002 she graduated with a Ph.D. in Religious

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<sup>86</sup> Ginger Barfield, Questionnaire: “SBC Takeover and Impact.” Edited Interview Response, February 11, 2012.

<sup>87</sup> Ginger Barfield, interview by author, February 11, 2012.

Studies (New Testament) from Duke University. While at Duke she was an adjunct professor at SEBTS, teaching Greek and New Testament. In addition to her degrees, Dr. Barfield has a Certificate in Baptist Studies from Mercer University (2005). I'm fairly certain Dr. Barfield was considered a future president of SEBTS. Here is Dr. Barfield's account, one indicative of how the conservative takeover made that impossible.

*When did you know you were called to the ministry? What role did you see yourself having as a Southern Baptist minister? How did you prepare for the ministry? What were your future career plans?*

I was a sophomore in college when it became pretty clear I was called to the ministry, though I thought at the time it would be youth ministry. I went to seminary to work on a Master of Religious Education (MRE) degree. I had always wanted to learn and read Greek and the New Testament, but the registrar initially didn't want to enroll me in those courses, saying I wouldn't need them as an MRE major. I had to convince him that it didn't matter; I *really* wanted to take them. When I took New Testament Survey and Greek I fell in love and changed my degree to an M.Div. In my second semester I decided that I was probably going to teach. I was fortunate to have good mentors at SEBTS who helped me see my gifts. I had been a teacher before seminary, so when I was ordained by Oakland Baptist Church in Rock Hill, South Carolina, it was with the recognition that I would one day teach at the seminary level.

*Where were you in your career path in 1979? When did you first realize the conservatives had taken control of the Southern Baptist Convention?*

In the late seventies I was reaping the effects of the women's movement as women started entering jobs which had been male-dominated: lawyers, professors, ministers, etc. We were naïve, however, thinking there would be no barriers, though there initially were

none at SEBTS. Women there were encouraged in their studies. No one told me, however, “Get your Ph.D. and we’ll hire you,” but after my first semester at Duke they did hire me as an adjunct professor. I’m not sure if I would have taught at SEBTS for the rest of my life, but I might have. Perhaps I was being groomed to be the first woman hired in the biblical area there, but no one ever stated that to me. It may have been more of my dream rather than a reality. Regardless, no one told me I couldn’t.

*What were your immediate thoughts following the Conventions of 1979 onward? If you were at any of the Conventions, please describe what you remember of the proceedings and your thoughts as they occurred.*

At the time, not a lot. What was going on was still low key so I didn’t have an initial awareness. I had no clue what had started in the Southern Baptist Convention that summer. I had never been to a convention but I started going in the eighties and that’s when I could see what was going on. I don’t think it was until 1985, when I was at Duke but had started teaching at SEBTS, that it became clear that Southeastern would be an easy mark because the Board of Trustees was so small. I realized, too, what a “full speed ahead” political machine the conservatives had.

When the SBC’s presidential elections became so heated – the conservatives knew this was the key to making it work – the moderates starting making sure people went to the convention to vote for the moderate. I got caught up in being there and wanting to vote. Then there’d be the letdown when we lost. I thought, “I can’t do this anymore,” but then someone would rally us for the next candidate. At some point, however, you realize it’s a lost cause. Once SEBTS went down to the conservatives I never went to another convention and never again considered myself to be a Southern Baptist. This

would have been 1988. When I finished teaching that year I took a job at St. John's Baptist Church in Charlotte. St. Johns wasn't in any way Southern Baptist. Tom Graves [a former SEBTS professor] was there and I joined his staff.

*What was the first impact the takeover had on your personal life? On your career?*

It was maybe our senior year [1981-82], when I was Dr. Spencer's TA, that I was teaching his class while he was out of town. I was calling role, but when I got to one guy's name he stood up and said, "Present. But I'm leaving because a woman should not teach or hold authority over a man." And he left! I was stunned. The whole class was stunned. I got a sense then that that kind of people were really there at Southeastern.

There was always something going on underneath – like the Peace Committee – that made it difficult for campus life. There were always forced issues toward reconciliation and peacemaking, but there never was any way to make peace. Every year at the convention another ominous resolution was passed, like the one against the ordination of women. But there were already women who had been ordained. What were we supposed to do? The local church was autonomous but they were passing things every year that became edicts about what the local church *had* to do.

Then, after the conservatives had taken over the Board of Trustees at SEBTS and when I was an adjunct, one of the trustees came to my 8:00 Greek class. He pulled me off to the side to tell me that my annual contract would not be renewed because I was a woman. Shortly after this another student told me his tuition to SEBTS had been paid so he could be there to catch the professors saying heretical things that he could then report

back to the conservatives. He said he was telling me because he felt bad about what he was doing.

It seems like every year when the board came someone else was dismissed. It was clear that the life going on outside the seminary was impeding life within the seminary, which was supposed to be for Christ. A lot of people came out of the takeover OK, but others were impacted in ways other than their careers. Dr. Steely died and I'm convinced he died of a broken heart. Some professors divorced. Fundamentalists said there needed to be a purging yet others would say what was happening was not wholesome and was destructive. I'm not correlating everything to the takeover but life "in the village" abruptly came to an eerie dysfunction.

We moderates in the Southern Baptist Convention lost because we took the high road. We chose not to use lies or over-exaggerations to deceive. We walked away, leaving all the theological schools. That means we had to start from scratch and now some schools are in financial difficulty. But along the way we found out the way to do things is to partner. We don't need our own publishing house or stand-alone seminaries; we can partner with universities for divinity schools.

*Where are you today? What led you this point? What path do you think your career would have taken had the takeover never occurred?*

Today I am Dean and Vice President for Academic Affairs at the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary (LTSS) in Columbia, South Carolina. It's a great ministry and vocation – and a call but one I couldn't have imagined. I wound up here when I was on the staff of Columbia's Kathwood Baptist Church. I started teaching evening Greek classes as an adjunct professor. LTSS had a Methodist Studies program

which brought in Methodist students. Methodist history, theology, and polity were taught so the students could get their whole education here. The seminary and I began to discuss the possibility of beginning a similar Baptist Studies program. I was brought in to develop that program. It started in the spring of 2003 and that fall I came on full-time. In 2005 I became the Associate Dean and in 2009 I became the Dean of the Seminary.

Career-wise I think I would have been more of a New Testament scholar and teacher, but what happened was I became a “jack of all trades.” I had worked in congregations and had a good ministry there – I have a heart for congregational ministry. My focus in ministry has always been teaching. I had imagined much more of a life of teaching, scholarship, and writing. That has not materialized because I have become much more of a theological education administrator. I didn’t have the scholarship (the writing career) that I expected. I’m more of an administrator, however, than my early planned career would have made me.

I’m at a good point in my life. I see Molly Marshall some at theological education meetings and events. She’s not where she would have been had things not happened at Southern. She’s gone through a lot of pain and hardship, but she has been able to do a lot of creative and life-giving things in theological education that wouldn’t have happened had she stayed at SBTS.

So there has been good that came out of it for her. I say the same thing for me. I’m not doing much of what I anticipated but God’s hand has been in it. That doesn’t make what happened *good*. There was evil present in what happened in the takeover. Lives



were lost and lives were wasted. But for me, it turned out okay. It wasn't easy to get to this point but I'm in a good place.

*Do you still consider yourself to be a Southern Baptist? If not, what do you consider yourself to be and why did you make that choice?*

No. I am now affiliated with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

Southern Baptists now have nothing positive to contribute to social action. But Baptists have never been all alike and we never will be; one Baptist has never had the power to speak for all Baptists. The 1988 resolution redefined priesthood of the believer by saying the authority of the church pastor trumped that. How they define autonomy of the local church today is just false and it's not Baptist.

Why is it so important to call yourself a "Southern" Baptist? I'm a Baptist who lives in the south but I'm not a Southern Baptist. I've never been a Southern Baptist in the way they now define themselves. I grew up in a church which was and is Southern Baptist but never in the way the SBC is now. My church didn't teach me those things growing up. I couldn't have grown to be what I am now if the most formative Baptists in my life had negated me as a female and had crushed my spirit.

Reverend Anna Anderson<sup>88</sup>

Some of the bad behavior I remember is masses of people making comments aloud when voting was occurring at the meetings, people refusing to ride on the elevators with my husband and me because we wore a sticker affirming "friends of missions" – the beginnings of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship movement. I remember seeing conservatives celebrating a "victory" at a restaurant, and realizing that we were being slowly separated from one another as Baptists.

– Anna Anderson, unpublished data<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Anna Anderson, Questionnaire: "SBC Takeover and Impact," Edited Written Response, January 30, 2012.

Rev. Anderson was one of the first people I met when I arrived at Southeastern and she became one of my closest friends. We were both church music majors (I later would change my concentration) so we had many of the same classes and sang in choruses together. As with many of my other case studies her entire higher education was Southern Baptist. She attended Mars Hill College (at the time a Southern Baptist college) in Mars Hill, North Carolina, graduating in 1979 with a Bachelor of Music degree with a concentration in Church Music. After graduating from Mars Hill she matriculated at SEBTS where she met me and her future husband, LaCount Anderson. LaCount graduated first so Anna followed him but later returned to SEBTS to finish her degree. After graduation she served as Minister of Music at several Southern Baptist churches.

Anna and I went through a rough time when I came out to her. By her own admission she had a “narrow-minded view about homosexuality.” Over time, however, she came under the “conviction” that this view was wrong, that God was “judging her for the way she had judged others.” She decided that she could love me for who I was. I was delighted when she and her husband attended my wedding near Boston in 2007.

Rev. Anderson was ordained in 2007 by Scotland Neck (North Carolina) Baptist Church. She left that church in 2010 to accept a position in Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina. Her decision to leave was affirmed when the new interim pastor told her that he had “searched the scriptures and still felt like the job of spiritual leadership in the church belonged to a man.” She is now Minister of Music and Missions at Rosemary Baptist Church in Roanoke Rapids and – along with LaCount – is a field missionary for

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<sup>89</sup> Anna Anderson, letter to author, January 30, 2012.

the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, serving eastern North Carolina. Rev. Anderson's narrative is the perfect example of how the takeover affected women ministers doing God's work at the local church level.

*When did you know you were called to the ministry? What role did you see yourself having as a Southern Baptist minister? How did you prepare for the ministry? What were your future career plans?*

I first realized God might be calling me to ministry around the age of 9 or 10 when I discovered music. It was a natural fit for me when I began to take piano lessons and I realized that I *got* music! It came naturally to me and it seemed that taking a gift I had and using it to do something useful with my life was what I should consider. No one really told me that, I just kind of came to it on my own. I was a part of a church where I had a wonderful role model in both a minister of music and a pastor. They encouraged, modeled, nurtured, and helped me to realize that my gifts could be used in service to God. I went to a college that had a church music degree then a seminary to pursue a master's degree, all the while thinking I might like to work in denominational structure; in particular, the church music department of the Sunday School Board, a beacon of Baptist publishing and resources. I never really thought about myself being anything but a minister.

*Where were you in your career path in 1979? When did you first realize the conservatives had taken control of the Southern Baptist Convention?*

In 1979 I was just graduating from college and entering seminary. Denominational stuff was not something on my radar at the time. In the early 80's I began to become more involved in all of that after I got married to a minister and we went to meetings and talked more with colleagues about what was going on in Baptist life. I first realized the

conservatives had taken control of the Southern Baptist Convention when I attended the meeting in New Orleans in 1982. I remember well the sad feeling to realize that the convention was now forever changed. I saw people behave badly towards one another.

*What were your immediate thoughts following the Conventions of 1979 onward? If you were at any of the Conventions, please describe what you remember of the proceedings and your thoughts as they occurred.*

Some of the bad behavior I remember is masses of people making comments aloud when voting was occurring at the meetings, people refusing to ride on the elevators with my husband and me because we wore a sticker affirming “friends of missions” – the beginnings of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship movement. I remember seeing conservatives celebrating a “victory” at a restaurant, and realizing that we were being slowly separated from one another as Baptists. I felt confused, unsure of what the controversy was really about. I began to hear words that I had never heard or thought about before...words like “inerrant” and “infallible.” I remember so much controversy about women and their involvement as deacons or ministers in churches. It was a difficult time as a Baptist, but it was a difficult time in particular as a woman Baptist because I was beginning to realize the prospects of my future involvement in Baptist life as the minister I was preparing to be. I remember the conventions being very divisive, lots of disagreeing, yelling; very unsettling. I can still see Charles Stanley, at the Dallas convention in the early 80’s, and how he had to almost ignore people who disagreed with him, being protected and shielded by his lieutenants, and counseled as to how to respond to almost every question, every scenario. He truly looked like a pawn in a game. I was impressionable and I knew that my attendance there was somehow important. I didn’t

stand alone, of course, but I began to realize the chasm that was forming in the lives of Baptists around me. And I began to feel like I was in the minority. I wish I had understood more at the time about the specifics of the controversy and the particulars about the issues. I knew so little, but I will never forget how it made me feel so uncomfortable and so disappointed.

*What was the first impact the takeover had on your personal life? On your career?*

The takeover impacted me because I was married to a minister. We served churches that were trying to sort it all out at the grassroots level, but it seemed to me to be more of an issue that affected pastors and church leaders than regular people in the pew. At this time, I was still trying to finish my seminary education and then raise an infant child, so during those years I really watched it more from afar than personally getting involved in it all. But I definitely remember how much people talked about all of it, both in churches and in state meetings and at the national conventions. When I still hear people talk about the last 30 years of controversy in SBC life, I am amazed that we seem to still be fighting this battle.

*Where are you today? What led you this point? What path do you think your career would have taken had the takeover never occurred?*

I am a minister in a Baptist church today that still supports some SBC causes, but also some CBF causes as well. I am also a field personnel with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, working as a missionary in the area of the country where I live. I have tried to remain open to those around me in my professional life who don't align themselves theologically with me. I don't know how successful I have been at that, but I've really attempted to be non-judgmental. I find myself wanting to be around those who are more

like me, though. Fundamentalism has been a dangerous and obvious ideology in the life of my husband's family so I've seen that in a personal way, and I've seen a few churches that have been swayed so much over the years by it as well. I think I would still be at the point I am today, vocationally, just because this is the path that I believe God has lead me on. I have spent some years of my professional life not in ministry, but rather involved as a lay person in Baptist life, but always involved. I never retreated because of the controversies within the SBC. We managed to find churches that we could align with most of our careers. Where it became difficult in other churches, theologically speaking, we walked through some other open doors and found a better fit for us.

*Do you still consider yourself to be a Southern Baptist? If not, what do you consider yourself to be and why did you make that choice?*

I still consider myself a *Baptist* but I never use the title *Southern Baptist*. I used to use that title and I even remember filling out medical forms or some other kind of informational forms and using the words "southern Baptist" (lowercase "s") to describe who I was as a religious person. I don't do that anymore. Instead, I now work with others who cooperate together as Baptists and I am proud, somewhat, to have that mantle as part of who I am. But the wording matters less and less to me. Now I just really want to work with people who care about helping people; people who want to work together, who want to cooperate with each other. Life is just too short to worry so much about labels. We've got a lot of work still left to do in helping each other live God's message of hope in a hurting world.

Reverend Dr. Molly T. Marshall<sup>90</sup>

Seeking God through serving the church has been my lifelong passion. One only seeks God because one is already sought, as the teachers of the faith have observed. My journey is a story of discerning that the regnant patriarchal structures of my ecclesial heritage were not God's ordained architecture, but a construction based on the fear of genuine equality between women and men.

– Molly T. Marshall in *Courage and Hope*<sup>91</sup>

I have never met Dr. Marshall but have followed her career, especially after the takeover. I considered her a “lightning rod” for those who opposed women in ministry particularly because she was a very well-known and respected professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. In fact, she was everything the conservatives feared in a woman: intelligent, respected, and ordained.

Dr. Marshall grew up in northeastern Oklahoma, a conservative area where – in her church – men were seen as leaders and women as followers.<sup>92</sup> Still, she felt called to the ministry when she was fourteen. She writes: “It never occurred to me that I was disqualified from following [God] simply because I was a girl or that I could not fully actualize this heartfelt decision.”<sup>93</sup>

As with Dr. Lolley, Dr. Marshall's entire higher education came from Southern Baptist schools. She received her B.A. from Oklahoma Baptist University and her M.Div. and Ph.D. from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. She was one of a

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<sup>90</sup> Molly T. Marshall, Questionnaire: “SBC Takeover and Impact,” Edited Written Response, December 31, 2011.

<sup>91</sup> Molly T. Marshall, “God Does Indeed Call to Ministry Whom God Will, Gender Notwithstanding.” In *Courage and Hope: The Stories of Ten Baptist Women Ministers*, ed. Pamela R. Durso and Keith E. Durso, (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2005), 120.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid, 122.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

“handful” of women in the M.Div. program at SBTS where she was met with “hostile” attitudes from some of her male classmates. Many of her professors were beginning to accept women in the ministry, however. The renowned Southern Baptist theologian Dale Moody was one such professor. After a sermon Dr. Marshall preached in chapel Dr. Moody told her, “Molly, sometimes Christ is seen in the face of a woman.”<sup>94</sup>

After receiving her M.Div. she worked in an Arkansas church as a minister of youth and single adults. It was here, in an environment where she was allowed and encouraged to preach and teach, that she “became absolutely persuaded through prayer, study, and personal experience that God does indeed call to ministry whom God will, gender notwithstanding.”<sup>95</sup> This realization led her back to SBTS where she completed her Ph.D. and began looking for teaching jobs. When all the jobs for which she applied went to less experienced men she accepted a position as an interim pastor in a small, rural Kentucky church. Shortly thereafter the church called her as permanent pastor. Area churches were a bit “alarmed” at this but “they respected the local church autonomy that this church had exercised.”<sup>96</sup>

In 1984 Dr. Marshall was hired by SBTS as the first woman faculty member in the School of Theology. Almost immediately fundamentalist Southern Baptists began an outcry. Although she was granted tenure in 1988 she was closely scrutinized – all her writings, lectures, etc. were put under a microscope, especially those regarding salvation

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid, 124.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid, 126.



and women in the church because her views were not considered to be in-line with the new conservative agenda.<sup>97</sup> In 1993 conservative Al Mohler became president. Mohler said that a stance against women pastors was a requirement in the hiring of new faculty members.<sup>98</sup> Within a year of his appointment Dr. Marshall was forced out of her position.

*When did you know you were called to the ministry? What role did you see yourself having as a Southern Baptist minister? How did you prepare for the ministry? What were your future career plans?*

I knew I was called to ministry at age 14, and I probably imagined that I would exercise my calling in youth ministry – the one open channel I could see for women in Southern Baptist life. I prepared for ministry by assisting our youth minister at First Baptist church in Muskogee, Oklahoma, attending Oklahoma Baptist University, working each summer during college as a youth minister, and attending Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. I did not think of a future career in ministry until about 1977 (while serving as a youth minister). I came to understand that the church would not be more inclusive and egalitarian in gender roles unless the seminaries that formed ministers changed.

*Where were you in your career path in 1979? When did you first realize the conservatives had taken control of the Southern Baptist Convention?*

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<sup>97</sup> Linda McKinnish Bridges, “Molly Truman Marshall.” In *Encyclopedia of Religious Controversies in the United States*, eds. George H. Shriver and Bill J. Leonard (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1997), 279.

<sup>98</sup> David T. Morgan, *Southern Baptist Sisters: In Search of Status, 1845 - 2000* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2003), 188.

I had returned to begin my Ph.D. at Southern in 1979, so I was well aware of the conservative resurgence afoot in SBC life. It became much clearer in 1984, shortly after I had been elected to the faculty of SBTS.

*What were your immediate thoughts following the Conventions of 1979 onward? If you were at any of the Conventions, please describe what you remember of the proceedings and your thoughts as they occurred.*

I thought I needed to hunker down, finish my Ph.D. (which I did in 1983), and prepare for a role teaching theology – which would be highly contested, which it was for the whole eleven years I taught at Southern. I did not attend the 1979 convention – I stayed away as a graduate student, but attended each after becoming a faculty member.

*What was the first impact the takeover had on your personal life? On your career?*

As you probably know, the impact was very hurtful. I lost my job and had my own writing career blunted for a good while. Anything I wrote, every public lecture, was scrutinized and became fodder for fundamentalist attack. My lectures were secretly taped and shipped to SBC “war rooms,” a grist for the campaign against “liberal theologians,” and “that Woman” in particular. Eventually I had no alternative but to resign – or go through a heresy trial in which the outcome was already determined – and I would have placed colleagues in danger.

*Where are you today? What led you this point? What path do you think your career would have taken had the takeover never occurred?*

I was forced out of Southern in August 1995 and came to Central Baptist Theological Seminary as professor of theology and spiritual formation. I served in that capacity for eight and a half years, and then became president in November 2004.<sup>99</sup>

*Do you still consider yourself to be a Southern Baptist? If not, what do you consider yourself to be and why did you make that choice?*

I became an American Baptist when I moved to Kansas City. I am not a Southern Baptist, except in heritage. I had my SBC ordination recognized by the American Baptist Convention and received “privilege of call.” It was an act of “shaking the dust.”

The Reverend Dr. Mona West<sup>100</sup>

The Bible has been used in America to justify our demonization and oppression and to label us as an “abomination.” Groups like the Moral Majority and Religious Right quote scripture in their rhetoric of hate against us that often leads to physical violence against members of our community.

– Mona West in “Reading the Bible as Queer Americans”<sup>101</sup>

I met Dr. West through Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) friends at Episcopal Divinity School (EDS).<sup>102</sup> She is a perfect example of the pastor/academician that the SBC lost through its incorrect interpretation of scripture regarding LGBT people.

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<sup>99</sup> Dr. Marshall became the first woman to serve as president of any Baptist seminary in North America.

<sup>100</sup> Mona West, Questionnaire: “SBC Takeover and Impact.” Edited Interview Response, November 18, 2011.

<sup>101</sup> Mona West, “Reading the Bible as Queer Americans: Social Location and the Hebrew Scriptures,” *Theology and Sexuality* 10 (March 1999): 28-42, <http://proxy.eds.edu:2206/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=1f392d7c-b69f-483e-902d-6a581ccb9099%40sessionmgr12&vid=4&hid=2> (accessed February 6, 2012).

<sup>102</sup> EDS is a very progressive, pro-LGBT school and therefore has many MCC students.

A “cradle Baptist,” Dr. West came from a Monroe, Louisiana, family of Baptists. She was at church “every time the doors were open.” Both her parents sang in the choir and taught Training Union. Both sets of her grandparents were members of the same church Dr. West attended. And, like Dr. Lolley and Dr. Marshall, her entire higher education was in Southern Baptist schools. As an undergraduate she went to Louisiana College (a Southern Baptist college in Pineville, Louisiana) where she majored in religion, graduating in 1979. She began work on her M.Div. at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1980, finished in 1983, and received her Ph.D. there in 1987. While a doctoral student she taught classes as an adjunct faculty member.

It was during her last year at SBTS that she began her coming out process. The first person she came out to was her pastor at Highland Baptist Church in Louisville. He was very supportive and referred her to a pastoral counselor. She was having a hard time reconciling her sexual orientation with her upbringing and the counselor was a great help to her. By the time she had finished her Ph.D. she understood that it was OK to be gay; she didn’t have to choose between Christianity and her sexual orientation.

Today she is Director of MCC’s Office of Formation and Leadership Development, having transferred her ordination credentials from the Southern Baptist Convention to the Metropolitan Community Churches in 1992. She is co-editor (along with Robert E. Goss) of *Take Back the Word: A Queer Reading of the Bible* (Pilgrim Press) and is one of the editors of *The Queer Bible Commentary* (SCM Press).

I was interested to hear that Al Mohler was one of Dr. West’s classmates while she was working on her Ph.D. at SBTS. (This was the same Al Mohler who would later oust

Molly Marshall from her position at SBTS.) He and Dr. West had some courses and seminars together and she described him as a good scholar. She related that he didn't appear to be the "hard core" conservative he is today. He was a likable guy whom she doesn't recall speaking out against women in the ministry. She doesn't know what happened to cause him to change and become "mean" in his theology but said that if he's an indication of where the SBC is today, it's pretty "scary." Below is the story of her journey into and out of the SBC.

*When did you know you were called to the ministry? What role did you see yourself having as a Southern Baptist minister? How did you prepare for the ministry? What were your future career plans?*

It was clear to me early on that I loved the Old Testament and that I wanted to get my doctorate and teach. I didn't see that as a call to ministry; rather, as a career plan. When I finished my doctorate I had the opportunity to teach for a year at a Presbyterian college, Austin College, in Sherman, Texas. I had a "hybrid appointment"; I was hired to teach Old Testament for a professor who was on sabbatical (so the appointment was for just a year) and I was the assistant chaplain to the college. This was the first time I felt called to the ministry. Because the Presbyterians were more progressive as per women in the ministry this was also the first time I preached and was seen as a minister. It was out of this experience that I was ordained. The school wanted this in order for me to perform my role as campus minister. I went back to Highland Baptist to seek ordination. The pastor who knew I was gay had moved on; therefore, I was not ordained as an "out" lesbian. I suspect some people on the ordination committee knew I was gay. I worried that they would ask me about it, but they didn't. It was sort of a "don't ask, don't tell"

situation. My partner was a member there and one year we had been asked to light the Advent candles together. I was ordained in 1987.

*Where were you in your career path in 1979? When did you first realize the conservatives had taken control of the Southern Baptist Convention?*

In 1979 I had just finished college and was not yet in seminary. I was working, making preparations to go to Southern. I started there in 1980. Up to this point I'd had "no clue" about feminism. It was at SBTS that my feminist consciousness was raised. I got to meet with Letty Russell when she was in town; this sort of introduced me to her world. Also, I had just been introduced to Mary Daly's *Beyond God the Father*.

It was also at SBTS that I got a sense of the politics in the SBC. The 1984 resolution against the ordination of women made me angry. I now started thinking about whether to stay in the SBC or leave. I knew there wasn't really a path for women as professionals in the Southern Baptist world. I decided to stay, however, and try to create reform from within rather than try to be a separatist. But it was a real struggle.

*What were your immediate thoughts following the Conventions of 1979 onward? If you were at any of the Conventions, please describe what you remember of the proceedings and your thoughts as they occurred.*

I did not attend any of the conventions. It was in 1984, I believe, when the first resolution was adopted against the ordination of women. I was angered by this.

*What was the first impact the takeover had on your personal life? On your career?*

I don't know where my path would have gone if I hadn't been a lesbian. I probably would have stayed at Anderson College and worked on an academic career. I was well-received there and was voted faculty member of the year. It's interesting because I don't know how I would have developed as a minister; I'm not sure it would have developed

beyond the academic world. But my call was wakened when I was at Austin College and I was in pastoral ministry for over ten years, seven in Dallas and three in Florida.

I was very, very closeted. When I finished teaching at Austin College I was accepted for a teaching position at Anderson College, a Southern Baptist college in Anderson, South Carolina. This was 1989. I was already suspect because I was ordained. It was an anomaly that a woman – an *ordained* woman – was teaching Old Testament. So I was very closeted. My partner did move to Anderson with me and we lived together. This was about the time I discovered MCC. My partner had been to a service and told me about it. We would go to the Baptist church in the morning and the MCC church later in the day. With MCC I encountered a situation where I was able to be “all of” me in a public way. I could be seen as a minister. I preached some and was able to get a feel for what that was like.

After about four years at Anderson College I totally came out of the closet and began to pursue a relationship with MCC. I resigned from Anderson in 1992. The public reason was that I wanted to explore options in other denominations with more autonomy in ministry. It was important to me to come out to some specific faculty members because I valued our relationship and I wanted to tell them the whole reason I was leaving. Even today, I’m still in touch with some of my Anderson colleagues.

I lived in Atlanta for a year before moving to Dallas to become the Academic Dean for Samaritan Institute, the school that trained clergy for the MCC.

*Where are you today? What led you this point? What path do you think your career would have taken had the takeover never occurred?*

Today I am back working with the denomination – the Metropolitan Community Churches. If I could have been out as a lesbian and engaged in pastoral ministry I don't know if I would have left the SBC.

*Do you still consider yourself to be a Southern Baptist? If not, what do you consider yourself to be and why did you make that choice?*

No, my ordination credentials have been transferred to MCC.

### Case Studies Conclusion

The spiritual upbringing of every one of the cases mentioned above was Southern Baptist. They grew up in and had early training in Southern Baptist churches. Dr. Lolley, Rev. Anderson, Dr. Marshall, and Dr. West all went to Southern Baptist colleges. Every one of them went to Southern Baptist seminaries. Drs. Lolley, Marshall, and West received Ph.D.'s from Southern Baptist seminaries. Every one of them was a card-carrying Southern Baptist and believed strongly enough in their faith that they chose to answer God's call and represent our denomination as God's ministers. Following the conservative takeover of the Southern Baptist Convention, their beliefs and training no longer were in line with denominational theology. What these persons perceived to be progress the conservatives saw as decline. What they as moderates had implemented conservatives had discarded. For example, Randall Lolley was one of Southeastern Seminary's most successful presidents. He implemented a shared form of governance leading to amazing increases in student enrollment and faculty size. An opposite form of government was applied when conservatives took control of the seminary. They dictated what the professors taught. The results of this new style were a marked decrease in



student enrollment and faculty size and probation from the seminary's accrediting agency.

Additionally, at SEBTS and throughout the SBC women had made advances as ministers and professors. Ginger Barfield, Anna Anderson, Molly Marshall, Mona West were ordained. Molly Marshall became SEBTS's first female professor in the School of Theology. Ginger Barfield was an adjunct professor at SEBTS and on track to become at least a full professor there. Mona West was a professor at a Baptist college. Other women throughout the SBC had made similar progress. Conservatives, however, saw the progress of women as contrary to biblical teaching. Once conservatives came to power steps were taken to return women to a status submissive to men. Women professors were ousted or relegated to non-theological positions. The office of pastor of a church was limited to men. Churches which ordained women faced expulsion from the SBC and/or its local groups. With these and other changes implemented by the conservatives following their coup Dr. Lolley, Dr. Barfield, Rev. Anderson, and Dr. Marshall, Dr. West all had a choice: capitulate or leave. All chose to find someplace else to go.

## Chapter 4: Today's Southern Baptist Convention

Rhetoric...has been used to gain power and control, to manipulate people, to make personal ambition, to cover up personal insecurities, and to hide a fear of the modern world with all its complexities...The [conservative] movement was more about a grab for power than the emergence of a new theology...It was more about excluding all who disagreed with them than finding a basis of unity in Christ. The proof of this conclusion is evident from what they did once they gained control.

– Kenneth Chafin in *In the Name of the Father*<sup>103</sup>

What might have prevented the crisis which Southern Baptists endured?...Even at the outset of the Conservative Resurgence, if seminary professors had admitted they had some problems and had sought to address and correct them, the emerging movement might have been stopped in its tracks. After all, mostly conservatives simply wanted the assurance that our seminaries would assume a position of biblical inerrancy, not a “Princeton scholasticism” but a “truth for its matter” presupposition with respect to the Bible. Yet none of that occurred, and the conservative majority finally rose up and ousted the usurpers.

– Jerry Sutton in *The Baptist Reformation*<sup>104</sup>

Earlier in this thesis I made the comment “the takeover took the SBC away from being a mainstream denomination and onto a theological path of ultraconservatism.” I’m sure when my conservative Southern Baptist friends read that statement they will say, “Praise the Lord!” Today’s Southern Baptists – especially those at senior levels, as is Dr. Land – are very, very happy that the denomination is not in step with a society where abortions are legal and where legal gay marriage equality (and the growing acceptance of homosexuality as normal) is spreading rapidly. Today’s Southern Baptist Convention is far removed from what it was prior to 1979...and that’s exactly the way the new leaders want it. But how much did the conservatives change the SBC?

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<sup>103</sup> Kenneth Chafin, “Foreword.” In *In the Name of the Father: The Rhetoric of the New Southern Baptist Convention*, ed. Carl L. Kell and L. Raymond Camp, (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2001), xi.

<sup>104</sup> Jerry Sutton, *The Baptist Reformation: The Conservative Resurgence in the Southern Baptist Convention* (Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 2.

In the past, resolutions were largely ignored by those who didn't agree with them. In today's SBC, many resolutions are reversals of past positions and are being enforced as mandates.<sup>105</sup> Individuals or churches which do not follow these "non-binding" resolutions are expelled from their local association, their state convention, and/or the national convention. This is in contradiction to the former practice where the Convention didn't tell the churches what they could or couldn't do. Rather, the churches told the Convention what to do because the organization was structured from the local church up.<sup>106</sup> The Baptist Faith and Message now "is being used as an official creed to enforce loyalty to the party in power. To refuse is to risk isolation or even expulsion from the denominational circle."<sup>107</sup>

Local church congregants are relegated to second class citizen status and subject to the authority of the pastor *they* hired, a practice more in line with the policies of independent Baptists.<sup>108</sup> In fact, after the takeover, many independent Baptists such as Jerry Falwell and his Thomas Roads Baptist Church became members of the new Southern Baptist Convention. At Thomas Roads Dr. Falwell, as founder, imposed a leadership style similar to that of a corporate CEO.<sup>109</sup> This autocratic form of pastoral

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<sup>105</sup> Cothen, *What Happened to the Southern Baptist Convention?*, 141.

<sup>106</sup> J.B. Weatherspoon, *Theron Rankin, Apostle of Advance* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1958), 117, quoted in William Powell Tuck, *Our Baptist Tradition* (Macon, GA: Smith & Helwys Publishing, Inc., 1984), 54.

<sup>107</sup> Russell H. Dilday, "An Analysis of the Baptist Faith and Message 2000," 4.

<sup>108</sup> Pat Cole, "Professor Sees More Authority by Clergy," *Baptist Press*, June 3, 1988. <http://media.sbhla.org.s3.amazonaws.com/6606,03-Jun-1988.PDF> (accessed January 24, 2012), 9.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

leadership became more accepted after the conservative changes to the SBC. Before, all parties – church members, pastors, local associations, state conventions, the SBC – understood and supported the egalitarian structure of the local Baptist church. The change to BFM2000 “Article XV: The Church” changed this understanding by elevating the pastor to head of the local church.

Also under the new “rules” women were back to the same sexist stature of half a century ago. Men, claiming to speak for God and using narrow interpretation of scripture, told women they were to stay silent. Contrary to what Dr. Land said, women were ousted from seminary positions just for being women and are still being kept out of theological positions. A look at current seminary faculty rosters shows that women are teaching music, psychology/pastoral care, social work, Christian education, etc. – but not theology. (That is, unless one counts Dorothy Patterson’s position at Southwestern as Professor of Theology in Women’s Studies.) Another result of the new “rules” is that in their homes women were told to submit to the authority of their husbands. Conservatives cloak this admonition in colorful rhetoric, claiming that women are still “equal” to their husbands. They fail to mention that nothing about submission implies equality. Submission is the recognition of the power of one’s superior. Moreover, regardless of the merit of the husband, women are expected to submit to him.

Women’s issues were set back decades, too. The Southern Baptist Convention was not always the sexist organization it is now. In the mid- to late-1970’s the SBC supported a woman’s right to all phases of reproductive health and was listed as a supporter of NARAL and RCRC, two of America’s largest pro-choice organizations.

Since 1979, however, resolutions have become increasingly sexist and have even apologized for past resolutions in support of choice. Note the succession of change in the Southern Baptist Convention regarding contraception and women's health:

- 1967 – SBC passes resolution in favor of birth control.
- 1969 – SBC passes resolution in favor of sex education.
- 1971 – SBC passes resolution in favor of abortion in case of rape, incest, severe fetal abnormality, or to save life of mother.
- 1978 – Foy Valentine, then executive secretary of the Christian Life Commission (now the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission) accepts an invitation for the SBC to become a national sponsor of the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights (RCAR; now the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice [RCRC]).<sup>110</sup>
- 1979 – The National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL) lists the Southern Baptist Convention as a pro-choice organization.<sup>111</sup>
- 1979 – SBC passes resolution urging government to limit role relating to abortion and supporting right of expectant mothers to have full range of medical services.
- **1979 – CONSERVATIVES BEGIN TAKEOVER OF SBC**
- 1980 – SBC passes resolution urging government to outlaw abortions except to save the life of the mother.
- 1980 - 2003 – Eight resolutions opposing “abortion pills,” stem cell research, and abortion except to save the life of the mother, etc.
- 2004 – SBC passes resolution “lamenting” past pro-choice position of SBC leadership and resolving to pray and work for repeal of *Roe v. Wade*.

Women as ministers have fared no better. Women were told that they were not worthy to be pastors. It has been mentioned that the first woman ordained as a Southern Baptist minister was Addie Davis in 1964. Ordinations increased slowly at first but by 1986 232 Southern Baptist women had been ordained, and by 1993 it was estimated that

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<sup>110</sup> Sutton, *The Baptist Reformation*, 310.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid, 311.

over 1,000 had been ordained.<sup>112</sup> With the creation of the Baptist Faith and Message 2000, however, the 1984 resolution against the ordination of women moved beyond being a “non-binding” resolution and became “doctrinal,” leading to the subsequent disfellowshipping of churches (see Chapter 2) and effectively putting an end to the ordination of women in the Southern Baptist Convention.

An example of the SBC’s position on the ordination of women is evidenced by action taken by the Home Mission Board (the department which handles mission work in the United States; today referred to as the North American Mission Board [NAMB]). In 1986 the NAMB voted to stop providing pastor funding assistance to churches which call women as pastors. Their argument was that to do so would be to violate the wishes of those donors who objected to women pastors. The Home Mission Board said they were not saying churches could not call a woman pastor, just that they would not fund any churches which did.<sup>113</sup> In a further example the SBC is so adamant in its stance against the ordination of women that when the cover of the September – October 2008 issue of *Gospel Today*, an evangelical magazine, showed five successful female pastors the SBC’s LifeWay Bookstores removed the magazine from their shelves. A spokesman for

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<sup>112</sup> “A Twenty-five-year Retrospective of Baptist Women in Ministry,” Baptist Women in Ministry, <http://www.bwim.info/files/State%20of%20Women%20in%20Baptist%20Life%202007.pdf> (accessed December 11, 2010).

<sup>113</sup> Alan Neely, ed., *Being Baptist Means Freedom* (Charlotte: The Southern Baptist Alliance, 1988), 26.

the bookstores said the magazine showed a position that was contrary to what was held by LifeWay.<sup>114</sup>

A troubling fact is that women are “buying into” the SBC’s sexist interpretation of scripture. Katie McCoy, a student at Southwestern Seminary won that school’s 2010 Baptist Theology Award for her white paper “Anchored Against the Tide: Female Pastors in the SBC and Contemporary Drifts toward Compromise.” In the paper, Ms. McCoy stated that she wishes the SBC would change the Baptist Faith and Message so it doesn’t just say women shouldn’t be pastors, but that women shouldn’t teach or have authority over a man and should remain silent, a literal interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:12.<sup>115</sup> Ms. McCoy doesn’t seem to realize that she is advocating against her own Southern Baptist career.

Homosexuality has also been a major battle point for the new SBC. Before the conservative takeover two resolutions on homosexuality had been passed at Conventions. Since the takeover there have been fifteen. As mentioned before, prior to the takeover homosexuality was widely considered to be a sin, even among moderates. Yet the autonomy of the local church, to ordain whoever they chose, was still recognized. One of two early resolutions passed by the SBC re-stated this recognition of local church

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<sup>114</sup> John Dart, Century News: 'Female Pastor' Story Rattles SBC Nerves, Christian Century, October 21, 2008, 16-17.

<sup>115</sup> Katie McCoy, “Anchored against the Tide: Female Pastors in the SBC and Contemporary Drifts toward Compromise,” Baptist Theology, <http://baptisttheology.org/documents/Anchored%20against%20the%20Tide.pdf> (accessed March 18, 2011).

autonomy and therefore only “urged” congregations not to ordain or hire homosexuals.<sup>116</sup>

In the early 1990’s, however, two North Carolina churches practiced their autonomy and their right to disagree with the resolutions. Pullen Baptist Church in Raleigh blessed a gay union and Binkley Baptist Church in Chapel Hill licensed a gay man to preach. The Southern Baptist Convention took swift action. At its annual meeting in 1992 it voted to oust the two churches from the SBC. Then, in 1993, for the first time in history an amendment concerning membership was made to the constitution’s bylaws. The change reads:

The Convention shall consist of messengers who are members of missionary Baptist churches cooperating with the Convention as follows: One messenger from each church which is in friendly cooperation with the Convention and sympathetic with its purposes and work. Among churches not in cooperation with the Convention are churches which act to affirm, approve, or endorse homosexual behavior.<sup>117</sup>

“Affirming, approving, or endorsing” has included being “friendly” with a pro-gay organization (the Alliance of Baptists, for instance); ordaining a gay or lesbian; performing a same-sex marriage, civil union, or commitment ceremony; or admitting a homosexual into church membership. Churches not in “friendly cooperation” with the SBC (Pullen and Binkley, for example) are expelled.

The Southern Baptist Convention is only a whiff of its former self. Resolutions are mandates. The pastor is the authority of the local church. Women are not equal in the church or in their own home. Young women are buying into the sexist agenda of the new leadership. Homosexuals are so unwelcome that churches are expelled for any kind of

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<sup>116</sup> “Resolution on Homosexuality,” Official Website of the Southern Baptist Convention, <http://sbc.net/resolutions/amResolution.asp?ID=606> (accessed February 9, 2012).

<sup>117</sup> “Constitution,” Official Website of the Southern Baptist Convention, <http://www.sbc.net/PDF/SBC-CharterConstitutionByLaws.pdf> (accessed May 15, 2011).



gay-friendly activity. What once had been a denomination of equality and cooperation is now a tightly controlled “our way or find somewhere else to go” regime.

## Conclusion

Conservatives say the takeover of the Southern Baptist Convention was all about theology; more specifically, the leftward shift of Southern Baptist theology. Moderates say, rightly so, that it was all about control. Daniel Vestal, a member of the Peace Committee writes:

After a year of sincere effort at being a ‘man in the middle’ reaching out to both sides, I realized that only one side really wanted reconciliation. I realized the Fundamentalists only desired control, total control, absolute control, and that they wanted no participation except with those who had that same desire.<sup>118</sup>

As Kenneth Chafin was quoted earlier in this thesis project, the proof is in the actions taken after the conservatives had free reign to make whatever changes they wanted. And those changes were all about control and oppression. First, whole classes of persons and groups were the targets of control. Women, whether in the church or in their homes, were put under the control of men who claimed to honor women and claimed they were equal to men. Such “honor” and “equality,” however, meant women had to stay silent and do as they were told. Second, church members were put under the control of the pastor who was elevated to the church authority. This was a total shift from the Southern Baptist position that every member of the church was equal to the church pastor. Third, churches were put under the control of the Convention. The definition of autonomy of the local church was changed. Under the new definition the SBC can still claim it as a tenet. However, churches which do not abide by certain mandates are expelled from the

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<sup>118</sup> Daniel Vestal, “The History of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship,” in Shurden, *The Struggle for the Soul of the SBC*, 253.

SBC. Lastly, any moderates that remained were put under the control of the conservatives. Abide by conservative rule or “find somewhere else to go.”

Moderates, frankly, were caught off guard by the power grab. Conservatives were able to take control of the Southern Baptist Convention because of trust – the moderates trusted that conservatives would be open and honest in their dealings. Moderates also trusted that the conservatives really weren’t trying stage a coup. Throughout Southern Baptist history conservatives and moderates each had had periods of being in power. The moderates trusted that, once again, the pendulum would swing their way. They didn’t think a major movement was under way because it had never happened before. “They were confident that Christians did not do such things as organize to elect a president and control a denomination.”<sup>119</sup>

The conservatives will say they “won” because it was God’s will. The “threat” to scripture (liberals who refused to acknowledge the inerrancy of the Bible) was defeated. How it was done – the questionable acts (the “get out the vote” campaign), the closed-door meetings, the secret caucuses – was a justified means to an end. That it destroyed so many careers and ministries and chased away so many of God’s ministers was collateral damage.

Thousands of Southern Baptists – including W. Randall Lolley, Ginger Barfield, Anna Anderson, Molly T. Marshall, Mona West, and myself – were part of that collateral damage. We stayed true to how we had been raised. We believed and practiced that which Southern Baptist churches, Southern Baptist colleges, and Southern Baptist

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<sup>119</sup> Cothen, *What Happened to the Southern Baptist Convention?*, 9 – 10.

seminaries had taught us: Christ as the criterion for the interpretation of scripture; the freedom of each individual in matters of faith; the freedom of the local church to determine its own ministry, ministers, and members; the equality of church members – female and male, pastor and congregant.

That hot June day in 1980 I believed my career as a minister was over. I was only half right. My career as a Southern Baptist minister was over; my career as a Baptist minister was not. Neither were the careers of Ginger Barfield, Molly Marshall, and Anna Anderson. The Southern Baptist Convention told them scripture forbade women to be pastors or hold authority over men. Knowing the SBC was wrong these strong women took their ministries somewhere else. The SBC told Mona West and me that scripture condemned who we were and we had to change. Knowing they were wrong we, too, took our ministries somewhere else. The SBC told Randall Lolley that he had to become an inerrantist and as a seminary president only hire professors who were men and who were inerrantists. Knowing the SBC was wrong, Dr. Lolley took his ministry somewhere else.

Some of the places to which we went would not have existed without a conservative takeover of the SBC. The Alliance of Baptists and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship were formed by other Southern Baptists who wanted to sustain historic principles. The Alliance is self-described as progressive, inclusive, and shaped by a “thirst for social justice.”<sup>120</sup> It is supportive of LGBT persons and same-sex marriage; therefore, it is the organization from which I will seek endorsement as a chaplain. Being a member allows

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<sup>120</sup> “About,” Alliance of Baptists: Baptists for a Changing World, <http://www.allianceofbaptists.org/learn/about> (accessed April 1, 2011).

me the freedom to be an openly gay Baptist minister. The more moderate CBF falls approximately between the Alliance of Baptists and the Southern Baptist Convention theologically and regarding social issues. Soul freedom, church freedom, and the authority of the Scripture are affirmed in their authentic form.<sup>121</sup> W. Randall Lolley was a driving force in its formation. The CBF strongly supports the ordination of women so Ginger Barfield and Anna Anderson have been able to continue their ministries as members.

Dr. Marshall and Dr. West went to already established organizations. Molly Marshall started as professor then became president at Central Baptist Theological Seminary, a school affiliated with American Baptist Churches U.S.A. (Central is also in full support with the CBF.<sup>122</sup>) Mona West has risen to the position of Director of the Office of Formation and Leadership Development in the Metropolitan Community Churches and was recently elected as an Elder.

It's impossible to say where any of us would be had not the conservatives taken control of the Southern Baptist Convention. The conservatives may have won the battle but we won the war. Our ministries flourished, albeit somewhere else. Our departure is the Southern Baptist Convention's loss.

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<sup>121</sup> "Who We Are: Cooperative Baptist Fellowship," Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, <http://www.thefellowship.info/About-Us/Who-We-Are> (accessed April 1, 2011).

<sup>122</sup> "Affiliation," Central Baptist Theological Seminary, <https://www.cbts.edu/topic/about-us/affiliation/> (accessed February 2, 2012).

Appendix I – Resolution on Ordination and the Role of Women in Ministry  
(adopted June 1984)

WHEREAS, We, the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Kansas City, June 12-14, 1984, recognize the authority of Scripture in all matters of faith and practice including the autonomy of the local church; and

WHEREAS, The New Testament enjoins all Christians to proclaim the gospel; and

WHEREAS, The New Testament churches as a community of faith recognized God's ordination and anointing of some believers for special ministries (e.g., 1 Timothy 2:7; Titus 1:15) and in consequence of their demonstrated loyalty to the gospel, conferred public blessing and engaged in public dedicatory prayer setting them apart for service; and

WHEREAS, The New Testament does not mandate that all who are divinely called to ministry be ordained; and

WHEREAS, In the New Testament, ordination symbolizes spiritual succession to the world task of proclaiming and extending the gospel of Christ, and not a sacramental transfer of unique divine grace that perpetuates apostolic authority; and

WHEREAS, The New Testament emphasizes the equal dignity of men and women (Gal. 3:28) and that the Holy Spirit was at Pentecost divinely outpoured on men and women alike (Acts 2:17); and

WHEREAS, Women as well as men prayed and prophesied in public worship services (1 Cor. 11:2-16), and Priscilla joined her husband in teaching Apollos (Acts 18:26), and women fulfilled special church service-ministries as exemplified by Phoebe whose work Paul tributes as that of a servant of the church (Rom. 16:1); and

WHEREAS, The Scriptures attest to God's delegated order of authority (God the head of Christ, Christ the head of man, man the head of woman, man and woman dependent one upon the other to the glory of God) distinguishing the roles of men and women in public prayer and prophecy (1 Cor. 11:2-5); and

WHEREAS, The Scriptures teach that women are not in public worship to assume a role of authority over men lest confusion reign in the local church (1 Cor. 14:33-36); and

WHEREAS, While Paul commends women and men alike in other roles of ministry and service (Titus 2:1-10), he excludes women from pastoral leadership (1 Tim. 2:12) to preserve a submission God requires because the man was first in creation and the woman

was first in the Edenic fall (1 Tim. 2:13ff); and

WHEREAS, These Scriptures are not intended to stifle the creative contribution of men and women as co-workers in many roles of church service, both on distant mission fields and in domestic ministries, but imply that women and men are nonetheless divinely gifted for distinctive areas of evangelical engagement; and

WHEREAS, Women are held in high honor for their unique and significant contribution to the advancement of Christ's kingdom, and the building of godly homes should be esteemed for its vital contribution to developing personal Christian character and Christlike concern for others.

Therefore, be it RESOLVED, That we not decide concerns of Christian doctrine and practice by modern cultural, sociological, and ecclesiastical trends or by emotional factors; that we remind ourselves of the dearly bought Baptist principle of the final authority of Scripture in matters of faith and conduct; and that we encourage the service of women in all aspects of church life and work other than pastoral functions and leadership roles entailing ordination.

## Appendix II – Case Studies/Histories: Questions and Participants

### Questions: SBC Takeover and Impact

1. When did you know you were called to the ministry? What role did you see yourself having as a Southern Baptist minister? How did you prepare for the ministry? What were your future career plans?
2. Where were you in your career path in 1979? When did you first realize the conservatives had taken control of the Southern Baptist Convention?
3. What were your immediate thoughts following the Conventions of 1979 onward? If you were at any of the Conventions, please describe what you remember of the proceedings and your thoughts as they occurred.
4. What was the first impact the takeover had on your personal life? On your career?
5. Where are you today? What led you this point? What path do you think your career would have taken had the takeover never occurred?
6. Do you still consider yourself to be a Southern Baptist? If not, what do you consider yourself to be and why did you make that choice?

### Participants

1. Reverend Dr. W. Randall Lolley, Interim Pastor, Crabtree Valley Baptist Church, Raleigh, North Carolina.
2. Reverend Dr. Ginger Barfield, Dean and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, Columbia, South Carolina.
3. Reverend Anna Anderson, Minister of Music and Missions, Rosemary Baptist Church Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina. Field Missionary, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.
4. Reverend Dr. Molly T. Marshall, President and Professor of Theology and Spiritual Formation, Central Baptist Theological Seminary, Shawnee, Kansas.
5. The Reverend Dr. Mona West, Director of Office of Formation and Leadership Development, Metropolitan Community Churches, Abilene, Texas.



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